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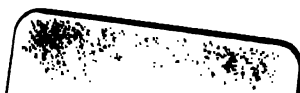
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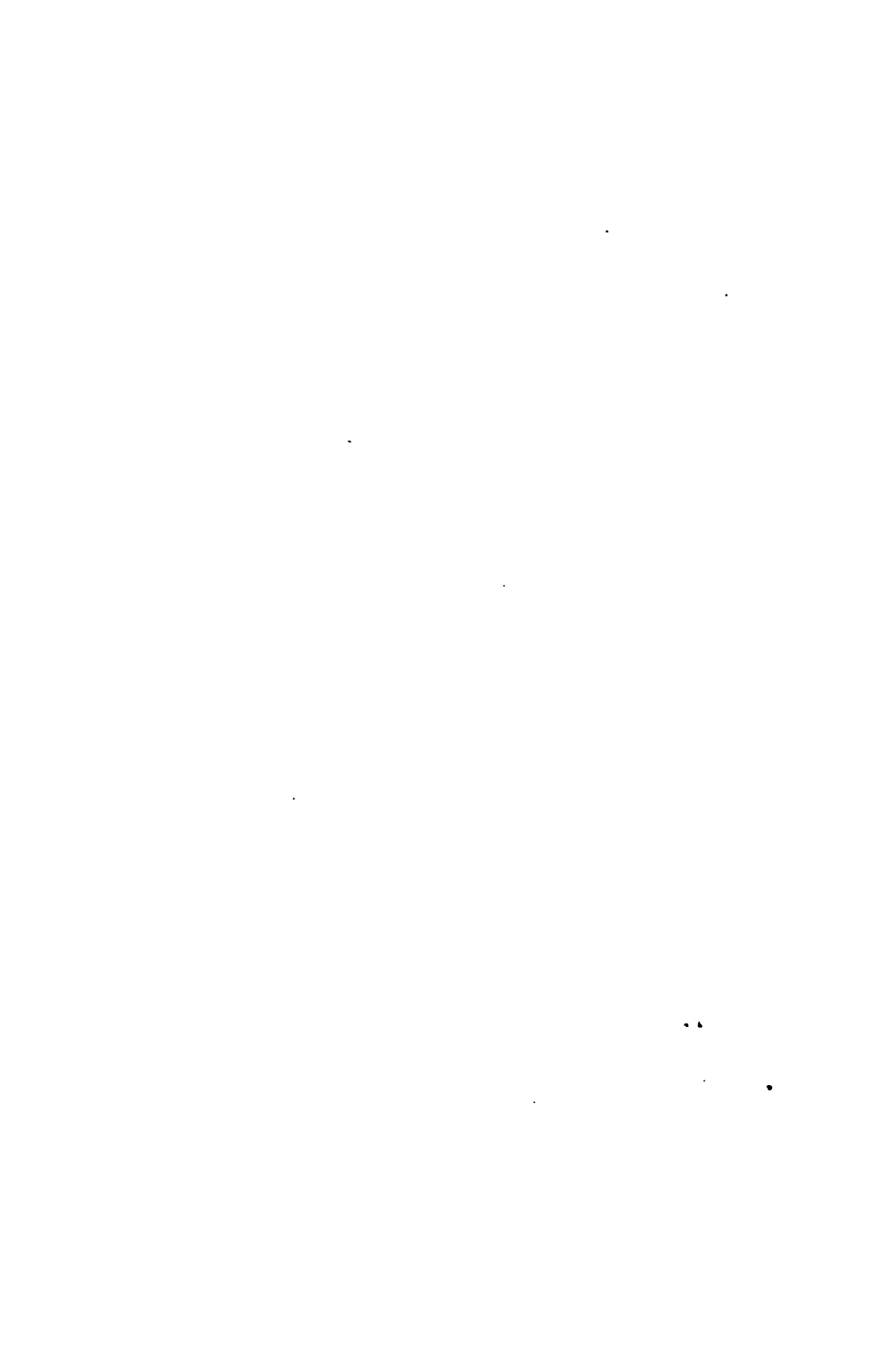


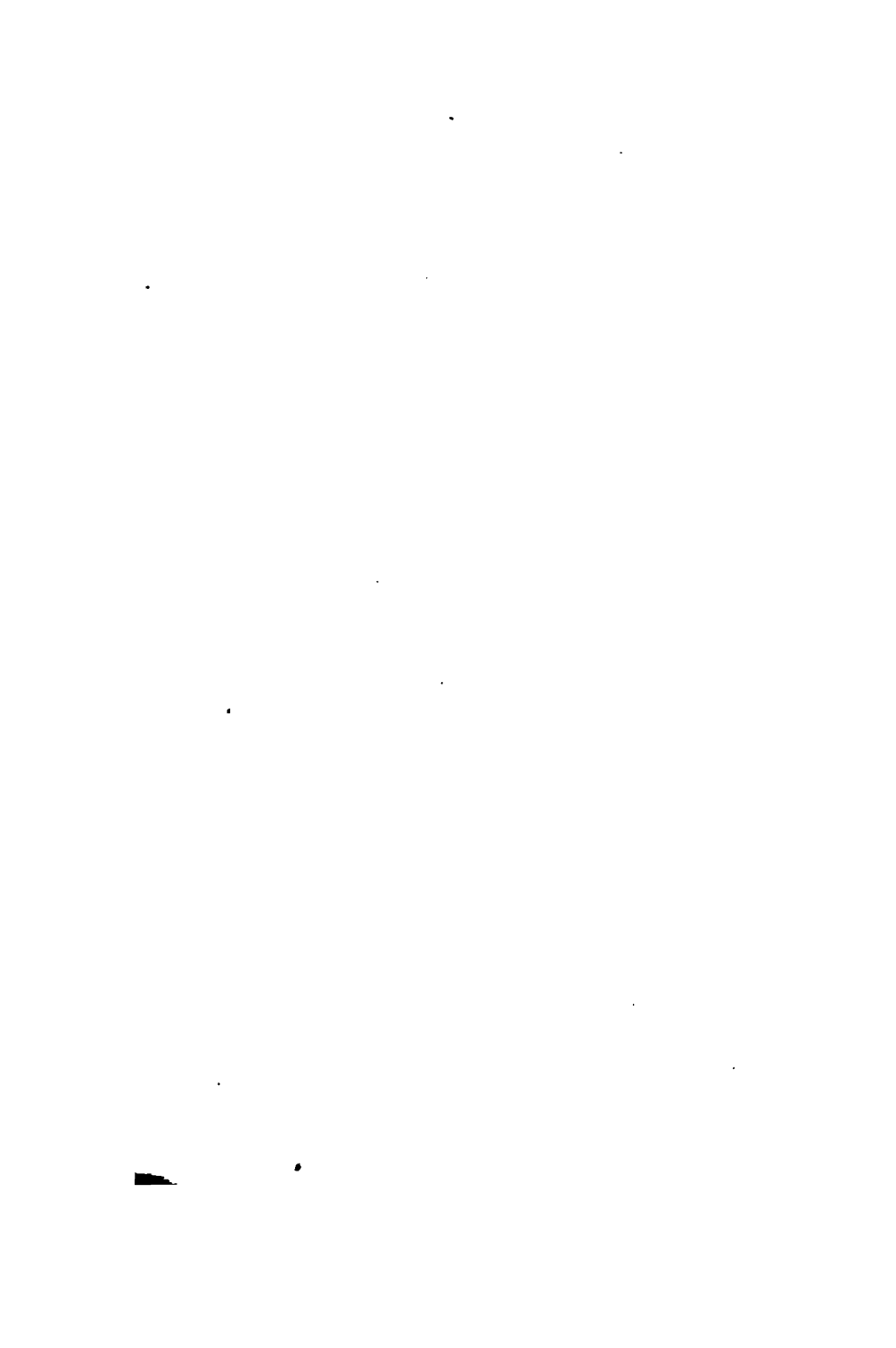
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**SPECIMENS,**  
**POETICAL AND CRITICAL.**





SPECIMENS,  
POETICAL AND CRITICAL.

BY THE

VERY REV. WILLIAM ALEXANDER, M.A.,  
OF BRASENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD, DEAN OF EMLY.

---

"Caro mihi valent stillas temporum. Eloquentium noli querere; multum enim  
de rebus laboravimus."—*St. Augustine.*

---



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## PREFACE.

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THIS collection, which the writer has only had a few days to throw together, is simply, as its title implies, a *fasciculus* of specimens.

With the Author poetry and criticism have been but the *parerga* of a life of incessant labour in a very different field. This is but to confess that these productions are neither finished and excellent in their kind, nor even so much so as their composer might have made them in other circumstances.

It may be asked what right a man has to rush abroad in a state of confusion in which he shall be ashamed to find himself at home? what end can be gained by printing pieces confessedly so imperfect? Possibly these specimens may serve to show whether the writer possesses, or does not possess, the poetical instinct which would make him a competent judge of other men's productions; whether he evinces, by his

own treatment of certain subjects, that conception of poetry, without which, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, a man can no more be a thorough poetical critic, than one who is unable to draw can be a thorough critic of pictorial art. Every poet is not a critic, and does not possess the analytic and the synthetic faculties together. But every true critic of poetry must have the sentiment, and, to say the least, will be much the better for having the practical faculty of a poet.

Whether the present specimens bear this witness at least in their Author's favour, and give promise of something better than themselves, he must leave others to decide.

W. A.

CAMUS RECTORY,  
STRABANE, IRELAND,  
*April 8th, 1867.*

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**PART I.**



**POEMS.**





## THE WATERS OF BABYLON;

BEING THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRIZE POEM ON A  
SACRED SUBJECT, 1857—60.

---

“C’est là le mystère après lequel soupirent toutes les âmes exilées, qui s’affligent sur les fleuves de Babylon, en se souvenant de Sion.”—BOSSUET.

---



DREAM of many waters. I beheld,  
And lo! a summer-night in Babylon,  
And the great river, even Euphrates, wash'd  
The land of Shinar, somewhat swifter now  
When snows were melting on Armenian hills.  
So by the hundred gates, lintel and post  
All polish'd brass, the waves went washing on.  
And on the flood the osier barges rode,  
Shield-shaped, with earthen jars of palm-tree wine  
Heap'd on the deck, and dark shapes stretch'd around.  
League upon league, through tracts of wheat and corn,  
That look'd on boundless plains like knightly hosts,  
Far glimmering with pale and ghostly gold:  
Through ranks of cedars, planted of the Lord  
Round the lign-aloes, by the river's side,  
Had they dropp'd down the flood. Then the tilth  
ceased,  
And banks, like mountains, rose on either hand,

Worthy of wonderment, the work of kings ;  
And long canals stretched lighted by the moon,  
And by the company of Chaldean stars :  
Till there came houses, bastion'd fortresses  
With lion-gonfalons, and a maze of streets—  
And then the terraced pyramid of Bel,  
And a vast palace, with its gardens hung  
As by art magic in the spiced air  
Pencill'd, like purple islands fast asleep.  
But evermore, by all the gates of brass ;  
And where the barges floated down the stream :  
And far along the sloping line of streets  
Hung with a thousand cressets naphtha-lit :  
And up among the garden-terraces ;  
I heard the murmur of Euphrates flood.

So as I linger'd there, anon methought  
The tide of life in that great city pent  
Parted in twain, and took its separate way.  
For one moved upward by the basalt wall,  
A host of fierce-eyed men, with long black hair  
Stream'd o'er white tunics, their dark faces wreath'd  
With turbans white, in every hand a staff  
Carven with lilies or with eagle-head.  
And haughty girls in gilded cars swept on  
To the Assyrian Aphrodite's fane,  
With faces passion-flush'd or terror-pale,—  
Red and white roses, rich, but soon to fade.  
High on the palace-terraces above

There walk'd a king\*—it made me fear to see  
How like he was to those old sculptured kings,  
Black-curl'd, black-bearded, full of state and woe,  
Who sit the world out on their chairs of stone,  
Staring for ever on the arrow-heads,  
Wherein their bloody chronicles are writ.  
There too I saw grey-beard astrologers,  
Who read the silver horologue of heaven ;  
And them, who shape the purpose shadow'd forth  
In visions of the head upon the bed ;  
And priests, who give attendance at the shrine  
Well-strewn, that hath no image of its god,  
Or at that other where he sits eterne,  
Statue and throne and pedestal of gold,  
Grinning and glimmering through the frankincense.

From all there diverse went another way  
Another concourse, gentler of regard.  
And as a widow, when her son is dead,  
Putteth her white lip down to the white shroud,  
And communeth a little while with death,  
So did the exiles commune with their Past.  
Psalms did they murmur—poesy of him,  
Shepherd, King, Saint, and penitent, who wore  
The golden grief that gave the golden song :—  
And later lamentations. For as when  
A wandering man, beside an ocean shore  
Belated, hears the waves upon the beach

\* Daniel iv. 29.

Discoursing drearily, and night hangs black  
On the black rocks, over the moaning sea ;—  
But suddenly there circles in the gloom  
A bird's voice wailing, like a soul in pain,  
Not dispossess'd of some immortal hope :  
So Jeremiah wail'd o'er Judah's path,  
Still round and round that strange old alphabet  
Weaving his long funereal chant of woe,\*  
Still singing sweetly of the seventy years !

I saw the exiles seek the river side,  
There where the willows grey grew in the midst  
Of Babylon, and hang their harps thereon.

Thus evermore in ear of either throng  
Sounded the voice of waters. It went up  
Over the city, where the forests hang,  
Sleepily parleying in the charmed light  
Round alabaster stairs and curious flowers  
From Media brought, and sunny steeps of Ind.  
How different to each !—To these it swept  
On with a din of Oriental war.  
It sounded an alarm that waken'd up  
Far echoes from far rivers all night long,  
Angering the dragon in his lotos-bed,  
And bringing Persian kings unto the brink

\* In primis quatuor capitibus Lamentationum versus literis initialibus ordinem Alphabethi sequuntur, ita tamen, ut in capite tertio tres semper versus continui ab eadem litera incipient. Ackermann. Introd. in Libros Sacros.

Of the Choaspes with their silver jars.  
Like a soothsayer it denounc'd a woe  
On Tigris, telling the predestined time  
When he should wail along a waste of bricks  
Painted with pine-cones, and colossal bulls.  
And like a divination it aroused  
As it were gods, ascending from the earth,  
Disquieting old kings to bring them up,  
Urukh, and Ilgi, Iva, and the rest,  
Whose politic alliances, fierce wars,  
And love, and hate have perish'd like themselves,  
Forgotten in the city where they dwelt.

But to the other throng the river told  
Things written in their great old Hebrew book.  
It told how it had swept through Eden once,  
A bright chord of the fourfold river-lyre.  
And it had old-world songs of Abraham,  
And him of Rehoboth who went to rule  
Among the dark-eyed dukes on Seir's red rocks,\*  
And him of Pethor,† walking wrapped in thought.  
Anon it seem'd to sing. "My waves flow past  
A dungeon, and one bound with chains of brass,  
A king, a crownless, childless, eyeless ghost! ‡  
And on my surface lights and shadows play,

\* These are their dukes . . . and these are the kings that reigned  
in the land of Edom . . . Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned.  
—*Gen.* xxxvi. 19, 31, 37.

† Numbers xxii. 5.

‡ Zedekiah.—See 2 Kings xxv. 7.

And moonlights quiver on the ripply lines,  
The silver roll among my sighing reeds,  
And the stars look into my silent depths.  
But on the awful river of his thoughts,  
Black as the waters of a mountain lake  
What time the hills are powder'd white with snow,  
Sunlight, and moon, and stars, are not at all :  
Dark, dark, all draped with shadows of his life."

Then came another tale—a legend wild\*—  
How the Ten Tribes, the banish'd of the Lord  
Took counsel with themselves, that they would leave  
The multitude of heathens, and fare forth  
To a far country, where there never came  
Oarsman or sail. A penitential host,  
They enter'd the Euphrates by the ford.  
And often hath the moon at midnight hung  
Pillars of luminous silver o'er the wave,  
But not a pillar half so broad and bright  
As that which steer'd them on, while the Most High  
Held still the flood. And aye their way they took  
Twice nine long months, until they reach'd the land  
Arsareth. There the mountains gird them in,—  
And o'er the gleaming granite pass white clouds,  
That sail from awful waterfalls, and catch,  
And tear their silver fleeces on the pines.  
And never hunter scaled those granite peaks,

\* See the legend of the journey of the Ten Tribes across the Euphrates to Arsareth in 2 Esdras.

And never wandering man hath heard the roar  
Of cataracts soften'd through those folds of fir,  
But a great temple hangs upon the hills,  
And ever and anon rolls through its gates  
A mighty music washing through the pines,  
And silver trumps still snarl at the new moon ;  
And all their life is sacrament and psalm,  
Vesper or festival, and holy deed.  
There do they dwell, until the latter time,  
When God Most High shall stay the springs again.

The waters changed their meaning. There came  
down  
Some of the others to Euphrates' brink,  
And much they question'd why those harps hung  
there,  
Saying "Come, sing us one of Sion's songs!"  
How shall they sing God's song in the strange land?  
For it is native of the Temple, laid  
Like a white flower on Moriah's breast;  
And it is not for Asia's sealike plain,  
But for the shadows of the purple hills:  
Not for the broad and even-pulsing stream,  
But for the land where Jordan passioneth  
His poetry of waterfalls, night and day  
Anger'd by cataracts, lulled by nightingales,  
Crown'd with white foam, and triumphing for ever,  
That is to the Euphrates, as a saint  
Full of sweet yearnings and of tears divine,



Is to some cold and passionless idol god  
Imprison'd in his rigid marble lines.

Next, as from a far country there came one—  
Slow was his gait, his garment travel-stain'd,\*  
And in his hand, methought, he held a scroll,  
Written from right to left, Semitic-wise.  
Then one said to him, "Wherefore art thou come?"  
And he—"I come from him of Anathoth."  
Whereat, he bound a stone upon the scroll,  
And flung it far away into the flood,  
When suddenly a trumpet blast wax'd loud,  
Against Chaldea rousing Ararat,  
And Ashkenaz and Minni, kingdoms old.  
Yea, instantaneously a mighty voice  
Of Heav'n, and earth, and all that is therein,  
Sang over Babylon. And as far north  
The ice-bound mariner looks up, and lo!  
The sky is spann'd with the auroral arch,  
And the Heav'n, full of glory, blossometh  
With light unspeakable—so now, methought,  
The sky grew radiant up above my head  
World upon world. And then I heard a song,  
Angels, archangels, and the company  
Of Heaven, chanting unto golden harps  
With exultation, "Babylon the Great  
Is fallen, fallen;" and from earth below  
Rose echo, "fallen, fallen" back again.

\* Seraiah—cf. Jeremiah li. 59.

And then I thought that I could hear far off  
The cedars and the firs of Lebanon,\*  
With a wind rustling all their odorous robes,  
That shaped itself in long low syllables,  
As if a happy thought went sighing through  
Their dark-green halls and sombre colonnades,  
Saying, "No feller comes against us now,  
Since they have laid thee low, O Babylon!"  
And the great river sobb'd, "O Babylon!"  
I beheld gods, and demigods, and kings,  
Like shadows upon unsubstantial thrones.  
I saw the crowns upon their withered brows,  
Like the thin circlet of the waning moon  
Over a thin white cloud. Ranged were they all,  
A royal consistory, row on row,  
Sleeping their sleep. But now their ranks were stirred,  
As the wan leaves, shrunk from red to white  
—The chestnuts' ashes, or the beeches' fire—  
Are stirr'd in heaps, and a shrill murmuring went  
Among them, like a wailing of the birds.  
And they look'd narrowly on one that came  
Into their company, and laugh'd, and said,  
"How art thou fallen, oh thou Morning star!  
For we are kings at least, and take our fill  
Of rest, each one in glory on his bed,  
Strewn with sweet odours, divers kinds of spice.  
But thou art as a wanderer in our land,  
Thy carcase, trodden under foot of men—

\* Isaiah xiv.

Disrobed, disceptred, dropp'd with blood, discrown'd!"  
Then Heav'n and the abyss were mute once more,  
And the curse fell upon broad walls, high gates,  
Utterly broken, burned in the fire:  
And the curse fell on garden-terraces,  
Faded, all faded, like a golden cloud,  
And tumbled, like a cliff in heaps of stones;  
And the curse fell upon Euphrates last,  
Fountain and flood, and all his sea dried up.

Yet other shapes and sounds came to me still.  
I saw a fire dark-red in the fierce sky,  
Three shadowy figures flitting to and fro;  
Far off I heard their *Benedicite*.  
I saw a host, across the river's bed,  
Trample right onward to a palace-gate,  
Whence from a great feast fled a thousand lords,  
And dark sultanas, dress'd in white symars.  
And in the hall I saw a blaze of light  
Round gold and silver cups of strange device,  
And one mysterious figure, scarlet-robed,†  
Waiting unmoved, and on the daïs high  
A king, the wine still red on his white lips.  
And I beheld a barge upon the wave,  
Lo! at its helm there was a godlike form,  
A glittering tiar above his kausia.‡

\* The Song of the Three Children.

† Daniel v. 29.

‡ See the account of Alexander's death in Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. xii.

Sitting the centre of a light of gems,  
 Shadow'd by silk-embroider'd sails, he steer'd  
 His pinnacle to the dyke Pallakopas,  
 Keeping his royal court and state on deck,  
 As he sailed down to see the pictured graves  
 Of the old kings, that sleep world without end,  
 Where shadows are the only moving things.  
 And one kept court upon the deck as well,  
 White-lipp'd, and grim, and stern, and that was Death!  
 And then a stately chamber, muffled round  
 With golden curtains, rose beside the stream :  
 And, his face cover'd with a silken veil,  
 Walk'd the Resch-Glutha\* among aged men,  
 Thin faces, pinch'd-up foreheads, narrow hearts,  
 Whereon the thoughts of God's eternal book  
 Are stamp'd in petty legendary lore,†  
 As the great waves with all their noble beat  
 Carve out those feather'd lines along the strand.  
 And last I thought Euphrates was dried up,  
 And o'er his bed the kings of the Orient,  
 Surging with war's full stream of clanging gold,‡  
 March'd to the battle of Almighty God.§

But on before me swept the moonlit stream,

\* The Prince of the Captivity.

† The Gemara, Mischra, and Talmud grew up among the Babylonian Jews.

‡

πολλῶν βεβήματι—

χρυσού καναχῆς.—SOPH. *Antig.* 130.

§ Apoc. xvi. 13, 16.

That had entranced me with his memories  
A thousand battles, and one burst of psalms,  
Rolling his waters to the Indian sea  
Beyond Balsara and Elana far,  
Nigh to two thousand miles from Ararat.  
And his full music took a finer tone,  
And sang me something of "a gentler stream" \*  
That rolls for ever to another shore,  
Whereof our God Himself is the sole sea,  
And Christ's dear love the pulsing of the tide,  
And His sweet Spirit is the breathing wind.  
Something it chanted too of exiled men  
On the sad bank of that strange river Life,  
Hanging the harp of their deep heart-desires  
To rest upon the willow of the Cross,  
And longing for the everlasting hills,  
Mount Sion and Jerusalem of God.  
And then I thought I knelt, and kneeling heard  
Nothing—save only the long wash of waves,  
And one sweet psalm that sobb'd for evermore.

1858.

\* "A gentler stream with gladness still  
The city of our God shall fill."—*Psalms* xliv. N. V.

## THE DEATH OF JACOB;

BEING THE POEM TO WHICH AN "ACCESSIT" WAS AWARDED BY  
THE JUDGES OF THE BEST POEM ON A SACRED SUBJECT IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, JUNE 1, 1857.

---

ARGUMENT.—Life and death—Life's first aspiration—Life's last promise  
—The grave—The glory—These things transferred to ourselves.

---

*ἄτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα.*



READ how Israel after life's long Lent  
Entered the quiet Easter-eve of faith—  
We do thee grievous wrong, O eloquent,  
And just, and mighty Death !

Life is a cave,\* where shadows gleam and glide  
Between our dim eyes and a distant light ;  
Faint breaks the booming of the outer tide,  
Faint falls its line of white.

When in the cave our spirits darkling stand,  
When the light strangely flickers on the floor,  
Comes Death, and softly leads us by the hand  
Unto the cavern door.

\* Ἰδὲ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους οἶον ἐν καταγείῳ οἰκῆσαι σπηλαιώδει . . . φῶς δὲ  
αὐτοῖς πυρὸς ἄνωθεν καὶ πόρρωθεν καόμενον ὅπισθεν αὐτῶν, κ.τ.λ.—PLAT.  
*Repub. Z.*

I saw the Syrian sunset's meteor crown  
    Hang over Bethel for a little space.  
I saw a gentle wanderer lie down,  
    With tears upon his face.

Sheer up the fathomless, transparent blue,  
    Rose jasper battlement and crystal wall—  
Rung all the night-air, pierced thro' and thro',  
    With harps angelical.

And a great ladder was set up the while  
    From earth to heaven, with angels on each round—  
Barks, that bore precious freight to earth's far isle,  
    Or sail'd back homeward-bound.

Ah ! many a time we look on starlit nights  
    Up to the sky, as Jacob did of old,  
Look longing up to the eternal lights,  
    To spell their lines of gold.

But never more, as to the Hebrew lone,  
    Each on his way the angels walk abroad,  
And never more we hear, with audible tone,  
    The awful voice of God.

Yet, to pure eyes the ladder still is set—  
    And angel visitants still come and go,  
Many bright messengers are moving yet  
    From the dark world below.

Thoughts, that are red-cross'd Faith's outspreading  
wings—

Prayers of the Church, aye keeping time and tryst—  
Heart-wishes, making bee-like murmurings,  
Their flower the Eucharist—

Spirits elect, through suffering render'd meet  
For those high mansions—from the nursery door  
Bright babes that climb up with their clay-cold feet,  
Unto the golden floor—

These are the messengers, for ever wending  
From earth to heaven, that faith alone may scan ;  
These are the angels of our God, ascending  
Upon the Son of Man.\*

I saw a tent beside the lotos river,  
I saw an old man bowed upon his bed :  
Methought the river sang, " I roll for ever,  
But he will soon be dead.

" Long since, his Grandsire walk'd beside my stream,  
His wife, a lily, lit my lilied meadows ! †—

\* St. John i. 51.—"The disciples could not but think of the ladder of Heaven at Bethel, when our Lord uttered these well-known words."—Stier's "Words of Jesus." The words *ἀπ' ἄπρι ὁψεσθε* must be understood of the abiding, continuous vision of faith, not of any momentary manifestation.

† "Abraham went down to sojourn in Egypt. . . . When Abraham



Long since, they glided, like a magic dream,  
Into the old-world shadows.

“ Up where his Grandsire rests the mummy goes,  
Up to the shrivell'd lily's mask of clay—  
But on my rolling music grandly flows,  
And it shall flow for aye ! ”

Whereto another voice kept chanting on,  
“ The shadows come, the shadows go, old river !  
But when thy music shall be mute and gone,  
He shall sing psalms for ever.”

And then, methought, beside that pastoral tent  
The ladder rose from the green land below—  
Fair spiritual creatures made descent,  
And beckon'd him to go.

But up the stream of days he seem'd to float,  
And twice seven years was toiling for his wife,  
And all his thought hung heaving like a boat  
On the long swell of life.

How statue-like that shape, in shadows deep—  
Like one of marble in the minster's rest,  
With a pale babe—not dead—but gone to sleep  
For ever on her breast.

was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.'—*Gen.* xii. 10—14.

And the white mother's breast may seem to heave,  
And the white babe to feel about her face—  
'Tis but our restless hearts that thus deceive  
The quiet of the place.

And Rachel look'd upon her Israel—wann'd,  
Like a white flower with the summer rain,  
So she with sweat of childbirth—her thin hand  
Laid on the counterpane.

Near Ephrath there's a pillar'd tomb apart,  
It throws a shadow on her where she lies,  
And she a shadow on her husband's heart  
Of household memories.

Then by the death-bed two fair boys bent down—  
So bend two wild flowers where the dark firs rise—  
Fell first upon the younger's golden crown  
Faith's blessing sunlight-wise.\*

Gather yourselves together, hear ye well  
Your fair adventure from the lips of death!  
Gather yourselves, ye sons of Israel!  
Hear what in song he saith.†

\* "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger . . . guiding his hands wittingly."—*Gen.* xlviii. 14.

† "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph."—*Heb.* xi. 21.

† *Genesis* xlix. 1, 2.

That so the old men in the after times  
 May find the wingèd words by memory sought,  
 Tracing the golden feathers of their rhymes,  
 Thro' the thick leaves of thought.\*

Darkly, O, Reuben! doth the tower of Edar †  
 Hang down its heavy shadow on the lea—  
 Dark droops the shadow of the mountain cedar—  
 Dark droops thy deed o'er thee.

With him, O brothers of the bloody hand!  
 Hard by the lustful heart dwell hearts of hate!  
 Be ye left lone and scatter'd in the land,  
 Who left love desolate.‡

Sweet ring the merry tabret and the pipe  
 On Judah's mountains, all the vintage long—  
 From the first flower, until the grape is ripe,  
 Soundeth a pleasant song.

Whelp of the lion! thee thy brethren praise—  
 The weir-wolf crouches at thy kingly feet—

\* See Hengstenberg's answer to the objections to Jacob's prophecy arising from its poetical character, and proving that the difficulty of handing down such a composition was diminished by its metrical cast.—*Christology*, lxviii. 70.

† Gen. xlix. 4.—“And Israel spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar; and when Israel dwelt in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine.”—*Gen.* xxxv. 21, 22.

‡ “And they slew Hamor and Shechem . . . with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house.”—*Gen.* xxxiv. 26.

The hissing of the serpent guards thy ways,\*  
Where horse and horseman meet.

Old lion of the hills ! the Heavens assign  
Rule unto thee, and law, and high estate,  
Till Shiloh come forth of the lion line,  
On whom the nations wait.

Thro' all thy waters lift a battle shout,  
Shout forth, O, Jordan ! for a warrior comes †—  
Dark forests ! roll your stormy music out,  
Like a long roll of drums.

Clash all your boughs, like shields that shock and  
sound,  
Where with his shield and buckler Gad appears—  
Lift your tall stems, like sheaves of lances, bound  
Over his plump of spears.

From Joseph's blossom'd valleys sail abroad  
The pale blue vapours born of living rills,‡  
From his high head are seen the stars of God  
Crowning th' eternal hills.

\* Alluding to the geographical position of Benjamin, "ravens as a wolf," and Dan, "a serpent by the way biting the horses' heels."

† For indications of the warlike character of the tribe of Gad, see 1 Chronicles, v. 18 ; xii. 8.

‡ See Lieutenant Vande Velde's account of the vapours in the vale of Shechem which render the scenery so peculiar.

And the white tents of Issachar are spread—  
Couch'd in good rest, the craven fears each comer\*—  
In sooth, a pleasant land of drowsy-head,  
Lit by the sleepy summer.

Asher is grey with many an olive tree,  
And Naphthali puts forth his goodly boughs,†  
Seen from the shore, Zebulon's silver sea  
Shines round Zidonian prows.

Hush'd is the song, the tribesmen all are bless'd,  
According to his blessing, every one—  
But still the old man's spirit may not rest,  
Until he charge each son.

Not where the Pharaohs lie, with incense breath'd  
Round awful galleries—grim with shapes of wrath,  
Hawk-headed, vulture-pinion'd, serpent-wreath'd,  
Hued like an Indian moth,

But lay him, where, from forest or green slope,  
To Mamre's cave the low wind beateth balm,  
Chanteth a litany of immortal hope,  
Singeth a funeral psalm.

\* Gen. xlix. 15. The sluggish and unwarlike character of the tribe of Issachar is amply illustrated by its subsequent history.

† Such seems to be the more probable rendering of Genesis xlix. 21.

Then slowly upward did the cold death creep  
From foot to face, with its strange lines of white,  
Like foam streaks on a river, dark and deep,  
Lash'd by the winds all night.

And then the feet were gather'd in the bed,  
The silver stairs were all astir with wings—  
Whatever lauds are sweetly sung, or said,  
Or struck on plausive strings,

Whatever harmony conch or trumpet rolls,  
From angels swell'd, address'd to entertain,  
With gratulation high, those purgèd souls  
For which the Lamb was slain.

We die—but no unearthly breezes bless,  
Blown from futurity, the passing soul—  
Thro' tangled mazes of our consciousness  
No prophet sunlights roll.

Yet as what time the softly floating mist  
Hangs o'er the hush'd sea and the leafy land,  
Nature, a passionless pale evangelist,  
Takes pen and scroll in hand,

And, looking upward, writes beneath the sea  
A colourless story, beautiful but dim—  
So Jacob saw the Lord in mystery,  
And darkly sang of Him.

But unto us He comes in fuller light,  
His pale and dying lips with woe foredone—  
No need to seek thro' many a day and night  
By starlight for the sun!

So come, O Shiloh! with the thorn-crown'd head—  
Come with the fountain flowing forth abroad—  
Bring faith the sacred Eucharistic bread,  
Give her the wine of God.

Come, with the open'd arms for sin to see,  
The sacramental side for sinners riven—  
O! in the hour of death we climb by Thee  
Up to the gate of Heaven.

Like a tall ship that beareth slow and proud  
A fallen chief—for pall and plume in motion;  
The death-dark topmast and the death-white shroud  
Drift o'er the silver ocean.

Silent the helmsman stands beside the wheel—  
Silent the mariners in their watches wait—  
And a great music rolls before the keel,  
As thro' an abbey gate.

Like that tall ship, a grand procession comes\*  
Up, from old Father Nile, to Hebron's hill;

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\* "And Joseph went up to bury his father . . . and there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great company."—*Gen.* i. 7, 9.

But no dead march is beat upon the drums,  
And every trump is still.

Heartsore and footsore with the march of life—  
Soldier of God, whose fields were foughten well—  
Resteth him from the cumbrance and the strife  
World-wearied Israel.

Twelve harps of life are round that stringless lyre,  
Twelve living flowers are round that wither'd one,  
Twelve clouds with his red sunset all on fire  
Are round that sunken sun.

Those twelve brave hearts are tolling evermore,  
For every heart beats like a muffled bell,  
And still they ring "Thy march of life is o'er—  
O weary soul, rest well!"

Still it sails onward, where the Red Sea fills  
With snowy drift of shells his coral bowers,  
Up thro' the wondrous land of rose-red hills  
To that of rose-red flowers.\*

The land, where aye thro' many a purple gap  
The wanderer sees a mountain-wall upspring;  
And ever in his ear the wild waves flap  
Like a great eagle's wing.

\* Dean Stanley compares the shells of the Red Sea to bleaching bones or white porcelain. "The mountains of the Sinaitic peninsula



Meet battlement for the race that dwells alone!—

Music to match, monotonous and grave,  
The tongue whose dark old words are all its own,  
Pure as the mid-sea wave.\*

Ever I walk with that funereal train—

The stars shine over it for tapers tall,  
And Jordan's music is the requiem strain,  
Drawn out from fall to fall.

Come thou, O south wind! with thy fragrance faint,  
Bring from those grand old forests, on thy breath,  
Balm for the mummy, lying like a saint,  
Upon his car of death.†

Bear him, ye bearers! lay him down at last

In still Machpelah down by Leah's side—  
On that pale bridegroom shimmering light is cast  
Laid by that awful bride.

Rests he not well, whose pilgrim staff and shoon ‡

Lie in his tent—for thro' the golden street §

were described by Diodorus Siculus as of a bright scarlet hue; viewed even in the soberest light, it gives a richness to the landscape," p. 11. For the profusion of scarlet flowers characteristic of Palestine, *ibid.* p. 138.

\* "Capiuntur signa haud levia de ingeniis populorum ex linguis ipsorum. Hebræi verbis tam paucis, et minimè commixtis utuntur, ut planè ex linguâ ipsâ quis perspiciat gentem fuisse illam Nazaream, et a reliquis gentibus separatam."—*Bacon, de Aug. Scien.* lib. vi. ch. 1.

† "The physicians embalmed Israel."—*Gen.* 1. 2.

‡ *Gen.* xlvii. 9. *Heb.* ii. 13.

§ *Heb.* xi. 9.

They walk, and stumble not, on roads star-strewn,  
With their unsandall'd feet?

Rests he not well, who keepeth watch and ward,  
In sweet possession of the land loved most,  
Till marshall'd by the angel of the Lord  
Shall come the Heaven-sent host?

Who has not felt, within some churchyard spot,  
When evening's pencil shades the pale-gold sky,  
"Here at the closing of my life's calm lot  
Here would I love to lie ;

"Here where the poet thrush so often pours  
His requiem hidden in green aisles of lime,  
And bloody-red along the sycamores  
Creepeth the summer-time ;

"Where through the ruin'd church's broken walls  
Glimmers all night the vast and solemn sea,  
As thro' our broken hopes the brightness falls  
Of our eternity?"

But, when we die, we rest, far, far away ;  
Not over us the lime-trees lift their bowers,  
And the young sycamores their shadows sway  
O'er graves that are not ours.

Yet he is happy, wheresoe'er he lie,  
 Round whom the purple calms of Eden spread—  
 Who sees his Saviour with the heart's pure eye\*  
 He is the happy dead!

By the rough brook of life no more he wrestles,  
 Huddling its hoarse waves until night depart—  
 No more the pale face of a Rachel nestles  
 Upon his broken heart.

He is encircled by the quiet home,  
 From whose safe hold no little lamb is lost—  
 The Jegar-sahadutha of the tomb†  
 No Laban ever crost!

I saw again. Behold! Heaven's open door,‡  
 Behold! a throne—the seraphim stood o'er it—  
 The white-robed elders fell upon the floor,  
 And flung their crowns before it.

I saw a wondrous book—an angel strong§  
 To heaven and earth proclaim'd his loud appeals—  
 But a hush pass'd across the seraph's song,  
 For none might loose the seals.

\* *πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας.*—*Ephes.* i. 18.

† "And Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha. . . . This heap be witness that I will not pass over this heap to thee for harm."—*Gen.* xxxi. 47, 52.

‡ *Apoc.* iv.

§ "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice."—*Apoc.* v. 2.

Then, fast as rain to death cry of the year,  
 Tears of St. John to that sad cry were given ; \*  
 It was a wondrous thing to see a tear  
 Fall on the floor of heaven !

And a sweet voice said, " Weep not : wherefore fails,  
 Eagle of God, thy heart, the high and leal ?  
 The Lion out of Judah's tribe prevails  
 To loose the seven-fold seal."

'Twas Israel's voice ; and straightway, up above, †  
 Stood in the midst a wondrous Lamb, snow-white, ‡  
 Heart-wounded with the deep sweet wounds of love, §  
 Eternal, infinite.

Then rose the song no ear had heard before ;  
 Then from the white-rob'd throng high anthem woke ;  
 And fast as spring-tide on the sealess shore  
 The Hallelujahs broke.

Who dreams of God when passionate youth is high,  
 When first life's weary waste his feet have trod—  
 Who seeth angels' footfalls in the sky,  
 Working the works of God,

\* "And I wept much."—*Apoc.* v. 4.

† "And one of the elders said unto me, weep not," &c., "Videtur esse Patriarcha Jacobus, quia ex ipsius vaticinio Christo nomen leonis tribuitur."—9, *Bengel, in loc.*

‡ *Apoc.* v. 6.

§ "Grande et suave vulnus amoris."—*Bernard in Cant.*

His sun shall fade as gently as it rose,  
Thro' the dark woof of death's approaching night  
His faith shall shoot, at life's prophetic close,\*  
Some threads of golden light.

For him the silver ladder shall be set—  
His Saviour shall receive his latest breath—  
He walketh to a fadeless coronet  
Up thro' the gate of death !


1854.

\* "These all died in faith."—*Heb.* xi. 13. "Fides maximè apud morientes viget."

## ODE,

ADDRESSED TO THE EARL OF DERBY, AND RECITED IN THE  
SHELDONIAN THEATRE, OXFORD, AT HIS INSTALLATION AS  
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 1, 1853.

---

 HAD been thinking of the antique masque  
Before high Peers and Peeresses at Court,  
Of the strong gracefulness of Milton's task,  
'Rare Ben's' gigantic sport.

Those delicate creations, full of strange  
And perilous stuff, wherein the silver flood  
And crownèd city suffer'd human change,  
Like things of flesh and blood.

And I was longing for a hand like those  
Somewhere in bowers of learning's fine retreat,  
That it might fling immortally one rose  
At Stanley's honour'd feet:—

Fair as that woman, whom the prophet old  
In Ardath\* met, lamenting for her dead,  
With sackcloth cast above the tiar of gold,  
And ashes on her head,

\* 2 Esdras ix. 10.

Methought I met a Lady yestereven ;

A passionless grief, that had nor tear nor wail,  
Sat on her pure proud face, that gleam'd to Heaven,  
White as a moon-lit sail.

She spake : " On this pale brow are looks of youth,  
Yet angels listening on the argent floor  
Know that these lips have been proclaiming truth,  
Nine hundred years and more :

" And Isis knows what time-grey towers rear'd up,  
Gardens and groves and cloister'd halls are mine,  
Where quaff my sons from many a myrrhine cup  
Draughts of ambrosial wine.

" He knows how night by night my lamps are lit,  
How day by day my bells are ringing clear,  
Mother of ancient lore, and Attic wit,  
And discipline severe.

" It may be long ago my dizzied brain  
Enchanted swam beneath Rome's master spell,  
Till like light tintured by the painted pane  
Thought in *her* colours fell.

" Yet when the great old tongue with strong effect  
Woke from its sepulchre across the sea,  
The subtler spell of Grecian intellect  
Work'd mightily in me.

“ Time pass’d—my groves were full of warlike stirs ;  
The student’s heart was with the merry spears,  
Or keeping measure to the clanking spurs  
Of Rupert’s Cavaliers.

“ All those long ages, like a holy mother  
I rear’d my children to a lore sublime,  
Picking up fairer shells than any other  
Along the shores of Time.

“ And must I speak at last of sensual sleep,  
The dull forgetfulness of aimless years ?  
O, let me turn away my head and weep  
Than Rachel’s bitterer tears.

“ Tears for the passionate hearts I might have won,  
Tears for the age with which I might have striven,  
Tears for a hundred years of work undone,  
Crying like blood to Heaven.

“ I have repented, and my glorious name  
Stands scutcheon’d round with blazonry more bright.  
The wither’d rod, the emblem of my shame,  
Bloom’d blossoms in a night.

“ And I have led my children on steep mountains  
By fine attraction of my spirit brought  
Up to the dark inexplicable fountains  
That are the springs of thought :



“ Led them—where on the old poetic shore  
The flowers that change not with the changing moon  
Breathe round young hearts, as breathes the sycamore  
About the bees in June.

“ And I will bear them as on eagle’s wings,  
To leave them bow’d before the sapphire Throne,  
High o’er the haunts where dying pleasure sings  
With sweet and swanlike tone.

“ And I will lead the age’s great expansions,  
Progressive circles toward thought’s Sabbath rest,  
And point beyond them to the ‘ many mansions ’  
Where Christ is with the blest.

“ Am I not pledged, who gave my bridal ring  
To that old man heroic, strong, and true,  
Whose grey-hair’d virtue was a nobler thing  
Than even Waterloo ?

“ Surely that spousal morn my chosen ones  
Felt their hearts moving to mysterious calls,  
And the old pictures of my sainted sons  
Look’d brighter from the walls.

“ He sleeps at last—no wind’s tempestuous breath  
Play’d a Dead March upon the moaning billow,  
What time God’s Angel visited with death  
The old Field Marshal’s pillow.

“ There was no omen of a great disaster  
Where castled Walmer stands beside the shore ;  
The evening clouds, like pillar'd alabaster,  
Hung huge and silent o'er.

“ The moon in brightness walk'd the ' fleecy rack,'  
Walk'd up and down among the starry fires,  
Heaven's great cathedral was not hung with black.  
Up to its topmost spires !

“ But mine own Isis kept a solemn chiming,  
A silver Requiescat all night long,  
And mine old trees, with all their leaves, were timing  
The sorrow of the song.

“ And through mine angel-haunted aisles of beauty  
From grand old organs gush'd a music dim,  
Lauds for a champion who had done his duty.  
I knew they were for *him* !

“ But night is fading—I must deck my hair  
For the high pageant of the gladsome morn ;  
I would not meet my chosen Stanley there  
In sorrow or in scorn.

“ I know him nobler than his noble blood,  
Seeking for wisdom as the earth's best pearl,  
And bring my brightest jewelry to stud  
The baldrick of mine Earl.

“ I and my children with our fairest gift,  
With song will meet him and with music's swell,  
The coronal a king might love to lift—  
It will beseem him well.


“ And when the influx of the perilous fight  
Shall be around us as a troubled sea,  
He will remember, like a red-cross knight,  
God, and this day, and me.”

VIRGILII ÆNEIS. LIB. VI. 1—281.

ANGLICE REDDITA.



I.

 he speaks weeping, and speeds on full sail,  
To Cumæ, the Eubœan city hoar.  
Oceanward safe at last from surf and gale  
The sailors turn their prows. Their perils o'er,  
The anchor stays them, and they rock no more.  
Far, far along with ships the strand is lined,  
The merry men leap on the Hesperian shore :  
Part strike the seeds of flame from flints, part wind  
Swift through the leafy lairs and forest fountains find.

II.

But good Æneas seeks the shrine exalted  
Where in his glory on the mountain height  
Apollo rules,—and the weird cave o'ervaulted  
With the far secrecy of awful night,  
The Sibyl's home. Her mighty mind and sprite  
The Delian seer doth evermore inspire,  
And touch the opening future with his light.  
They enter Trivia's groves, and much admire  
The Temple's dazzling lines, fretted with golden fire.

## III.

They say self-exiled Dædalus going forth  
From Minos' realms with pinions swift and bold  
Dared trust him to the sky, and swam far North  
Way unattempted! to the Arcti cold.  
Lightly at last o'er Cumæ's ancient hold  
Self-poised he hung, and first from air set free  
Treading this firm green earth, his vow enroll'd  
To dedicate the wings that oar'd the sea  
Of the blue sky, in fanes, O Phœbus, built for thee!

## IV.

The fane is built—lo! the doors sculptured here,  
Androgeos' death. This side the Athenians stand,  
Ah me! in act to yield their seven a year.  
The urn is there; the lot is in the hand.  
Opposite answers the fair Gnossian land  
Ridg'd o'er the ocean with its rise and fall.  
Behold! the beautiful bull, the evil-plann'd  
Adultery of Pasiphaë, and withal  
The two-form'd child, the pledge of love unnatural.

## V.

Here too stands sculptured the much-labour'd place,  
The inextricable labyrinth, and how the untold  
Love-pangs of that poor queen did bring her grace  
From Dædalus. Within his hands behold

Guiding blind steps the thread that might unfold  
The maze.—O Icarus ! thou would'st prevail  
In that fair piece to win large space of gold.  
But sorrow marr'd his art—to carve the tale  
A father's hands twice o'er were raised, twice o'er to fail.

## VI.

All this had they perused with eager eyne,  
Had not Achatas come, and by his side  
Priestess and prophetess, of birth divine  
Deiphobe. “ Not this the time or tide,  
O King ! ” she said, “ on metal glorified  
By sculpture to stand eye-charmed. Rather crave  
The hour and the god, seven steers by yoke untried,  
Seven ewes of ritual meetness.” These they have  
Full soon, and follow her down to her mountain-cave,

## VII.

An antre in a scour of the old world—  
A hundred subterranean avenues broad  
Lead to its hundred mouths, whence back is hurled  
The Sibyl's hundred-echoed voice. They trod  
The threshold, when “ The god ! behold the god !  
’Tis time to interrogate the Fates,” she said ;  
And saying neither face nor hair abode  
In natural wise—apant she was with dread,  
And all her long hair stood abristle on her head.

## VIII.

Greater she look'd and taller ;—superhuman  
The majesty and the music of her tone ;—  
The inspiration of a mortal woman  
Breath'd by a Deity now nearer grown.  
“Cease not !” she cries ; “thy prayers, thy vows  
make known.  
Not without this of darkness shall yon gate  
Astonished ope, for things inanimate own  
The power of prayer.”—She ceased. Chill fear thereat  
Curdled the Teucris's frame : with accents passionate

## IX.

From his deep heart their King made supplication :  
“O Phœbus ! pitiful of Troy's unrest,  
Who gav'st the Dardan shaft its inclination  
From the hand of Paris to the heroic breast  
Of great Æacides ! Lands the loneliest  
In old mysterious Afric, Thee for guide,  
Wild fields long-stretch'd by sand-banks low of crest  
Has my bark touch'd, and regions wild and wide  
Silverly ring'd around by the untravell'd tide.

## X.

“And now at last our breath is on the brow  
Of Italy ; we grasp the fair form flying  
O'er the blue sea illusive. Until now  
Troy's fortune follows us. Your heavy-lying

Vengeance from Ilium, no more defying  
Your godhead by her glory, adverse powers!  
Remove. And thou, with voice prophetic, crying,  
Let rest my people (Lo! we ask but ours),  
And my disquieted gods at last in Latium's bowers.

## XI.

"So, twins Latonian! shall a marble shrine  
Of massy proof to ye be dedicate.  
So shall dawn days of song and sun and wine,  
Days of high festival in my future state—  
Call'd by the name of Phœbus. There await  
Thee too, O Sibyl! places deep and dread,  
And chosen men, to keep thy words of fate.  
Only these awful lines of thine be said,  
Not written on light leaves by wild winds scatterèd."

## XII.

But like the steed untaught to bear its master  
Plunges the seer, if so be she may skill  
To fling the Presence from her. He, the faster,  
On the foam'd mouth and fierce heart pressing still,  
Wearies her out, and curbs her at his will.  
The hundred entrances open suddenly,  
And on the breezes doth this answer thrill:  
"The land hath wilder storms than sweep the sea;  
Safe from the perilous deep these storms are waiting  
thee."



## XIII.

“ Ah! to Lavinium (this thou need'st not dread)  
The sons of Dardanus shall come, full fain  
That they had come not. Battles, and battle-red  
With foam discolour'd, I behold amain  
The Tyber rolling—On that fatal plain  
Camps shall not want; nor yet another river,  
New Simois or Xanthus; nor again  
A new and goddess-born Achilles,—never  
Shall Juno cease to haunt thy hated race for ever.

## XIV.

“ Then in those days, calamitous indeed,  
Alliances thy pride shall stoop to sue;  
The cause of so much woe again decreed  
A foreign bride, unto the Trojans true.  
But thou, what ills soe'er may come anew,  
Bate not a jot of heart or hope—nor cease  
To go right forward, as the boldest do  
Far as their fortune. The first way of Peace,  
Little as thou may'st deem, comes from the side of  
Greece.”

## XV.

With such like sentences the Sibyl sings  
Dree in her voiceful cave, and darkly weaves  
Her words obscure round truly boded things.  
Such rein, such goad hath Phœbus. But when leaves

The inspiration the wild heart it heaves,  
And the pale lips, quieted, foam no more,  
Begins Æneas, "Nought here freshly grieves,  
No new face unexpected rises o'er  
The sea of woe. My heart has traversed it before.

## xvi.

"One only boon, since here is the hell-portal,  
The shadowy marish, Acheron's overflow ;  
Ah ! let me see my dear sire's face immortal,  
And teach thou me the way that I must go.  
Him from the city flaming far below  
I bare upon these shoulders, shaft and dart  
Raining by thousands after. Winds that blow  
Angrily o'er the seas we sail'd athwart,  
Heaven that he braved with me, was this an old man's  
heart?

## xvii.

"By his command I come with supplication ;  
Pity a son and father ! Lo, 'twere meet ;  
For not in vain hath Hecate thy station  
Fixed o'er the under-world. By those most sweet  
Harpstrings of his, if Orpheus won to greet  
His consort's ghost ; if Pollux walketh well,  
For brother-love, with oft-returning feet  
Death's awful road ; what boots me now to tell  
Theseus, Alcides, and my birth of miracle ?"

## XVIII.

He said, and grasp'd the altar. She spake then :

“ Not to descend (descent most easy is !)  
Child of the blood of gods and godlike men !  
Not to descend (for evermore dark Dis  
Keeps his gates open)—up from the abyss,  
Earthward to walk, and feel the upper breeze,  
This is the work of works, the labour this.  
None have attain'd it, save few souls who please  
High Jove, by virtue borne to starry palaces.

## XIX.

“ All the vast interspace is night-black forest,  
Embay'd by dark Cocytus round and round.  
If then that toil, the emptiest yet sorest,  
So please thy spirit, twice to wander bound  
Across the Styx, twice see the shadowy ground,—  
Hear what thou hast to do. A bough all golden  
Lieth perdue in a thick tree. The encrown'd  
Hell-empress claims it. All the forest's olden  
Immeasurable depths about the bough are folden.

## XX.

“ But none without the gathering of the tree's  
Growth that hath golden leafage ever may  
Enter that obscure country. So decrees  
She who demands the gift—Proserpina.

Ever as one such bough is rent away  
Leafs me another of the self-same stuff.

Look well ; pluck quickly. Eathes it follows aye  
Whom the fates favour. Otherwise no rough  
Effort can conquer it ; no steel is sharp enough.

## xxi.

“ Now whilst thou lingerest here inquiring much,  
A friend’s corpse lies unburied by the foam  
Unknown to thee ; and Death’s defiling touch  
The fleet contaminates. First it doth become  
To bear the dead man to his own long home.  
Bring dark-fleeced victims, expiate the dead.  
So through the Stygian realm thy feet may roam.”  
Long silence kept she when these words were said:  
Æneas left the cave, downcast, in drearihead.

## xxii.

Much he revolves these issues dark and blind,  
Much with his dear Achates, faithful mate  
Who walks beside, with equal cares of mind,  
Surmises, what companion deadly fate  
May have incurr’d—who lies in such estate.  
Behold ! they see Misenus on the strand  
By deed unworthy done to death of late.  
None better breath’d the brass ; that master-hand  
Brave hearts hath often thrill’d and flames of battle  
fann’d.

## XXIII.

Once with his spear and clarion, in glory  
He used to walk the thickest of the fight  
Great Hector's comrade. But when Hector gory  
Lay by Achilles slain, the heroic wight  
Followed Æneas, no inferior light.  
Now while he challenges the gods eterne  
With bugle blowing o'er the sea forth right,  
Him, as they tell, did Triton overturn  
Where through the circling rocks the waves for ever  
churn.

## XXIV.

All mourn, Æneas chief. Tears on each face,  
They do what Sibyl bids. As altars look  
So looks the pyre. They range an antique chase.  
Fall the funereal pines; with many a stroke  
The ilex sounds, wedge-cloven is the oak,  
Down from the hills the mountain ash they rend.  
Æneas girt him for the work and spoke,  
Sadly his thoughts revolving while he kenn'd  
The immeasurable world of wood without an end.

## XXV.

"Ah! if the golden bough upon that tree  
By tell-tale glinting were made visible  
Through the great forest! All too well of thee,  
Misenus, did the seer her bodement spell,

Good should there come too from the oracle.”  
Scarce said, when lo! from heaven with sweet accord  
Twin doves flew down (full easy could he tell  
His mother’s birds) and flashed on his regard,  
And lightly settled down upon the grass-green sward.

## xxvi.

Joyful he prays, “Fly gently, doves most fair,  
An’ there be way, O gently fly and guide  
Your happy course directing through the air  
To the rich turf that ever doth abide  
By opulent shadows strangely glorified  
Under the Bough miraculous. Mother mine,  
Goddess and mother, at this doubtful tide  
Fail not thy son.” He halted with strained eyne,  
Watching what course they took, expectant of a sign.

## xxvii.

Graceful they glided on with many a pause,  
Now fluttering, now feeding,—never lost  
Quite from his ken, till o’er Avernus’ jaws,  
Whose pitchy breath by light wing is uncross’d,  
Lapsing through liquid air upon that most  
Desirèd seat, the enchanted tree, they sit.  
There through the duller boughs one gold-emboss’d,  
With a reverberated glimmer lit,  
Twinkled atween the leaves, discolour exquisite.

## XXVIII.


Like as in winter cold in sylvan places,  
No produce of its tree, comes a strange green,  
And round great stems, like pillars, interlaces  
Its delicate network's crocus-colour'd sheen,—  
Like as the mistletoe in wood is seen,  
Such on the shadowy ilex-tree withal  
Look'd the gold growing its dark leaves between;  
So came there to the low wind's rise and fall  
Metallic tinkling thin and faintly musical.

## XXIX.

It, seeming loth to part, incontinent  
Æneas plucks and to the Sibyl brings.  
But on the shore the Teucri made lament,  
And to the ashes bare their offerings  
That have no gratitude for mortal things.  
A pyre funereal high aloft they raise,  
All rich and resinous for the fire's strong wings.  
Dark leaves enweave it. Trophies of his frays,  
O'er cypresses of bale they hang his arms ablaze.

## XXX.

Part haste the boiling caldron all a-bubble,  
Wash the cold corpse, anoint it, and make moan.  
Then on the bed that never shall know trouble  
They place the limbs, and over them are thrown



The purple vestments that are so well known.  
Part stoop below the bier (a woeful toil !)  
Holding the torch averse, as erst was done.  
Fiercely and yet more fierce do the flames boil  
With frankincense flung in and flesh and cups of oil.

## XXXI.

After the fallen flame had ceas'd to burn,  
They pour'd wine on the ashes all athirst ;  
And Corynæus in a brazen urn  
Gather'd the bones, his comrades thrice aspers'd  
With dew from happy olive, ere he durst  
Breathe the last words. Æneas on a hoar  
Headland the arms, wherein the man was versed,  
Hung high above his sepulchre, trump and oar.  
The Trumpeter's name that cliff beareth for evermore.

## XXXII.

This done, he executes the seer's behest.  
There was a grotto pebble-strewn and vast,  
Safe was it folden by the inkiest  
Of lakes, and shadows falling thick and vast  
From the great woods. Above it never pass'd  
Bright bird unstricken, such a reek there goes  
From its jaws ever to the sky o'ercast.  
Four dark-backed steers the maid doth now dispose,  
And pours the sacred wine slope down between their  
brows.



## xxxiii.

Taking atop the bristly tufts betwixt  
Their horns, she gives the fire the first libation,  
Invoking Hecate, whose sway is fix'd  
In heaven and hell. The others in their station  
Bring knives. The spirting blood for expiation  
They catch in bowls. Æneas smites amain  
A dark-fleec'd lamb, the due propitiation  
To the great daughters of old Chaos twain,  
A barren heifer too for Hecate is slain.

## xxxiv.

Thus does he auspicate to the Stygian sire  
His altar of the night, and minister  
For the steers' entrails, heap'd upon the fire,  
The outpour'd oil. Lo! many a mountain spur  
With all its woods is wondrously astir,  
Soon as the dawn begins to streak the dark,  
And as the Goddess'-presence nears, for her  
Bellows the earth, and through the shadows, hark!  
Deep-baying all the hounds of hell begin to bark.

## xxxv.

"Far hence," the prophetess exclaims, "far hence  
Be ye who are profane, from all the land!  
Much need, Æneas, of the heroic sense  
And the firm soul. March onward, sword in hand!"

She said, and plunged into the cave, and grand  
With fearless steps he followed her right on.

Gods of the manes ! voiceless shadows ! wann'd  
And silent places lighted of no sun,  
Oh ! suffer me to speak, Chaos and Phlegethon.

## XXXVI.

Darkling they walk'd beneath the lonely night,  
On through the shadows, through the tenantless  
homes,


Realms unsubstantial. Look ! such dubious light,  
Malign and chequered, to the traveller comes  
Belated far a-forest, when there glooms  
Rather than shines a moon in clouded skies  
Upon a colourless world. Before the rooms  
Hell's antechambers couchant, there he eyes  
Sorrow and Conscience's avenging mysteries.

## XXXVII.

Yon is the home of Sickness, pale and pining,  
Old Age and Fear and Famine, that can win  
To evil deed,—of Poverty entwining  
Misery with Shame,—of Death and Labour's din,  
And Sleep, Death's brother and his next of kin.  
Over against them, and against the lair  
Of those Ill Joys that are the foulest sin,  
War on the threshold stands,—and Discord there,  
With ribbons blood-bedropped wove through her snaky  
hair.

## THE ISLAND CHURCH.

[The subject of these lines is borrowed from Runeberg, the poet of Finland. Of Runeberg's poem I have only seen a literal translation in French prose by M. Geoffroy. I have freely used the incidents supplied by the Swedish poet, but there are not more than two or three verses in which I have attempted to preserve the expressions which I found in the French translation.]

OOR was the peasant, poor and heavy-hearted ;  
Gone were his fields, his children, and his wife,  
The kindly friends of other days departed,  
The fine lights faded from the hills of life.

Glad threads of speech, if rough, the labourers mingle  
By their own fires, where their own smoke-wreaths  
curl ;

But Onni sat beside the stranger's ingle,  
And steep'd in tears the scant bread of a churl.

The young have hope : but on his head was shaken  
The snow that summer-sun shall never thaw ;  
Yet bless'd are they whom Heav'n hath undertaken  
To chasten and to teach from out God's law.

O bread of God ! O fields for ever sunny !  
O fadeless flowers upon life's craggiest shelves !  
O better substance, more enduring money,  
By grace laid up within our hearts themselves !

Midsummer-day ! All night the child hath folden  
Himself in expectation, heart and head,  
Like a bee in some rich bell dusty-golden,  
With long sleep pleasantly disquieted.

Midsummer-day ! All night the rivers going  
By heath and holm triumphantly have slid,  
All night a soft and silver overflowing  
From joy expected bathed the sleeper's lid.

Midsummer-day ! At morn the maiden merry  
Dons her green kirtle : in the hawthorn lane  
The farmer's boy beneath the rows of cherry  
Brings hampers full of flowers in the wain.

Midsummer-day ! The sad and wrinkled peasant  
Smiles as he stands erect upon the sod :  
" In holy church to-day it will be pleasant  
To taste the liberty of the sons of God."

Midsummer-day ! They smother up the altar  
With coronals, the richest of the year,  
The village choirs have practised well the psalter,  
The grand old hymns to Finland ever dear.

The feast of flowers ! The old priest has conn'd over  
A bran-new homily—joyful, yet perplex'd—  
Redolent of garden bloom and meadow-clover ;  
“ Behold the lilies ! ” is the good man's text.

The feast of flowers ! Sky, ocean, earth, seem turning  
All things to flowers. Midsummer winds expire  
In perfumed music through the roses, burning  
Like wreaths of red flame on the gilded wire.

Flowers in the churches ! Every birchen column  
Blushes like dawn, or gleams as when it snows ;  
Their sweet breath in the holy air is solemn,  
Like warbled music when it comes and goes.

Flowers on the window-sill, and in the chamber,  
Flowers round the great stem of the village tree,  
And far away of infinite blue and amber  
The rose of heaven, the violet of the sea.

Speaks out the peasant Onni : “ O my master !  
But for a little while let me away.  
Hark, through the woodland walks is rising faster  
The voice of them that keep their holiday.

“ All winter long, when the wild wind was grieving,  
Thou know'st I drudged for thee in wet and cold ;  
All spring, when God's great sunshine was inweaving  
Through forest-leaves his thousand nets of gold,

“ I work’d thy flax ; and still the bounding river  
Swept with his silver trumpets through the glade,  
But my poor ear was sicken’d with the shiver  
That the monotonous shuttle always made.

“ Worse, worse than that; for we our gathering festal  
Once in the twelvemonth only have down here,  
But saints and angels, on the sea of crystal,  
Their feast of flowers keep round th’ eternal year.

“ And much I dread, lest, when my dear Lord call me,  
The chants of Heaven sound strange within my heart,  
The low base influence of the earth enthrall me,  
Till I forget how I may bear my part.

“ Yea, worse than all, six months how long and dreary,  
This starving soul of mine is unsufficed  
With that sweet invitation to the weary,  
The music of the promises of Christ.

“ O master !—let me call thee, O, my brother !—  
I pray thee by all prayers thy heart may search,  
I pray thee by the days when with thy mother  
Thou kept’st the feast, O, let me go to church ! ”

But the churl pointed to the stream, where sombre  
A great white mist was creeping from the hill,  
Dulling the splendid laughters without number  
That twinkled on the water by the mill,

And said with thick voice, eloquent of the flagon,  
    " There lies thy way to church, thou preaching loon!  
Go in that boat alone, I have no waggon—  
    Perhaps thy prayers to church will bring thee soon."

And Onni heard speechless, and taking only  
    The oar, full heavy for that wrinkled hand,  
A weak adventurer in his vessel lonely,  
    Pray'd inly, " God of ocean and of land !

" Sweetly and strongly at Thy will far bringing  
    All fins in waves, all plumes upon the breeze,  
Beautiful birds to western forest winging,  
    And whatso passeth through the paths of seas,

" Me, of more value, with my soul immortal,  
    Mine infinite futurity, than they,  
Me, a wing'd voyager to Thy starry portal,  
    Lead, loving Father ! to Thy church to-day."

Wearily, wearily, drags the oar, and slowly,  
    Like a man blinded by the snow athwart  
His smarting eyelids, trails the boat, and, wholly  
    Lost in the fog, the rower loses heart.

And ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, in the distance,  
    The church bells sounded over holt and hill.  
He dropp'd his oars, and, weary of resistance,  
    Let the strong river bear him at its will,

Until at last the bark's keel sharply grated  
Upon the white sand of a little isle ;  
Then ding dong, ding dong, to the man belated,  
The bells first clash'd, then ceased a little while.

White clung the colourless mist on the island forest,  
Unbeautifying its green depths and fells ;  
Sad were his thoughts, but just when grief was sorest,  
A silver music changed upon the bells.

Then the mist thinn'd ; the lustrous sky, from off it  
Sweeping one cloud, left interspace of blue,  
One isle of summer-light, one voiceless prophet  
Of sunny touches that make all things new ;

And kenn'd beyond the furthest intervening  
Of dark green hall, and sombre colonnade,  
The northern river far away was sheening  
Like the dark blue of some Damascan blade.

" Ah, in the church are psalms divinely tender "—  
Yet here is music too, not earthly born,  
Dropp'd downward by the sky-larks as they render  
Some air heard up beside the gates of morn.

And in the woodland depths, with restless shiver,  
From branch to branch the countless wild birds sing ;  
So the swift bow of a musician ever  
Flits with the melody from string to string.



“ Ah, in the church the flowers are surely glorious,  
And the old pillars look full bright and brave ;  
And the great organ, trembling yet victorious,  
Keeps quivering on like light upon the wave.

“ And better still, the good Priest of Christ’s merits  
Speaks to believing hearts, right glad yet awed,  
And launches sinful yet forgiven spirits  
On that great deep, the promises of God ;—

“ Whilst I, far off from church, like one in blindness  
Groping, lose sacrament and pastoral tone.  
The Lord commandeth not His loving-kindness,  
I am cast out from His pavilion.”

Yet here are flowers, and light, and voices mystic—  
Were never such, since when, as Scripture tells,  
The High Priest in the Holiest moved majestic  
With gems oraculous and with golden bells.

And here are pillared pines, like columns soaring,  
With branches tall that like triforium are,  
And a soft liturgy of winds adoring,  
With echoes from some temple-gate ajar.

And that no consecration may be wanted,  
One gently passes through the haunted place,—  
Not like Him on the crucifixes painted,  
With white, cold, aged, agonising face—

Not crowned with thorns, and ever bleeding, bleeding,  
Stains on that rigid form more dark than wine—  
Not dead but living, beautiful exceeding,  
Divinely Human, Humanly Divine.

And Onni prays the prayer that knows no measure  
By bead, or clock, or count of regular chime—  
The prayer which is the fulness of all pleasure,  
In words unutter'd, and transcending time.

His worship ended, Nature sang no longer,  
But grown contemplative was silent too ;  
And now made gladder, calmer, holier, stronger,  
He raised his voice, and bade his soft adieu.

“O, fellow-worshippers with me and Nature,  
Who sang God's praises with my soul forlorn,  
Wild flower, and forest tree, and wingèd creature,  
And all the sunny sanctities of morn,


“River, whom God hath taught to be my pilot,  
Needles of light that dart through larch and birch,  
Ripples that were the music of mine islet,  
And pines that were the pillars of my church—

“Peace, and Farewell.” Then happier and faster  
He glided homeward down the watery way,  
And with a gentle smile, said, “Thank you, Master.  
“I was at church, I kept my feast to-day.”

## THE ICE-BOUND SHIP.

A LYRICAL FRAGMENT.

---

HREE things are stately found—  
Yea, four (one saith) be comely in their going,  
The lion, and the he-goat, and the hound,  
And, with his flying flags, and bugles blowing,  
The king, in harness, marching mailed and  
crowned :

Stately is each of these ;  
But statelier still the battle-ship,  
When o'er the white line of the heavy seas,  
Like stars o'er snow-crowned trees,  
Storm-swayed and swung, its bright lights roll and  
dip.

And statelier yet again  
The spirits of our sailor Englishmen,  
Well pleased with forward ocean's manly roar,\*  
They only fear the shore.

\* \* \* \* \*

These things are stately found ;  
But when the lion slowly, slowly dies,  
Never waxing well of his deep wound ;

\* κτύπος ἄρσην πόντου προβλῆς.—SOPH. *Philoct.*, 1455.

When the he-goat on the golden altar lies,  
Fastened to it for a sacrifice ;

When the baying of the hound  
Never more beneath the hunter's glad blue skies  
To the merry, merry bugle shall make full answer rise  
On the field, or by the yellowing forest skirt,  
Dying of a deadly hurt,  
From the storm of chase apart,  
With a horn-thrust in his stout old heart ;  
When the king who march'd forth mailed and crowned,  
With roses rain'd from balconies and clarions' ringing  
sound,

Hath red drops upon his battle shirt,  
Bleeds away into his silver mail,  
Sees his banners like a tattered sail,  
And the oldest captain's cheek turns pale ;  
When those desperate horsemen charge and fail,  
And himself is taken by the foe and bound ;—  
He-goat, lion, king, and hound,  
Statelier far and nobler are ye found—

Statelier far and nobler thus—  
Beauty and glory are less glorious,  
Less beautiful than sorrow grand, and true ;  
The steadfast will is more august than Fate,  
And they who greatly suffer are more great  
Than they who proudly do !

\* \* \* \* \*

And when the man-of-war

No longer takes the tide on her dark hull,  
 Nor, like a sea-bird, dippeth beautiful,  
     Bows under to the green seas rolling far;  
 And heareth never more the hardy tar  
     The wind that singeth to the Polar star,  
     Humming and snoring through rigging and spar;  
 But like a grand and worn-out battle-car,  
 The good ship rests, with crystals round the keel,  
 And frost-flowers hanging from the wheel.

    And when the man-of-war  
     Rests ice-bemarbled, she is statelier there,  
     As the crusader carven still and fair,  
     With those white hands of prayer,  
 Is holier than the soldier fiery-souled  
 Glimmering in steel and gold,  
 Oh, red-cross knight! Oh, red-cross ship! enough ye  
     both have toiled.

And the funeral bell hath tolled,  
 And wave and battle both away have rolled,  
 The ocean's billow and the banner's fold,  
 The great white horses and the rider bold.  
 Ah! sea and war have now no troubling breath.  
 Brave knight! good ship! ye surely are assoiled  
     By the great pardoner—Death.


\*        \*        \*        \*        \*

Stately! but statelier yet,  
 What time the Winter thy good ships beset  
 With ice-mailed meshes of his awful net,  
 And wondrously the summer sun went down,

Tiara'd with the shadow and the flame—  
And Night with horror of great darkness came  
On her black horse, a veil upon her face,  
Riding above his sunken crown—  
But Day's white palfrey kept not equal pace.\*  
Seal and bear, and walrus brown,  
Were heard no longer on the floe;  
Sledge or kayak of the Esquimaux  
Come there never to that land of woe;  
Ptarmigan and grouse were flecked with snow,  
All the ivory gulls flapped far away;  
Fox and hare, turned white and silver grey,  
Crept in silence closer to the day.  
Silence—silence—save the ice that growled,  
Save the wind that hammer'd the stiff shroud,  
Or like lean dogs through the darkness howled,  
Hunting on some weird and wolfish cloud.  
Ah me! the wise men tell,  
Who read the dark speech of the fossil well,  
How in some age *Æonian*  
The mild moons, as 'twere queens at play,  
Shook out their splendours, like a silver fan,  
And delicate ammonites boated in the bay,  
And on the beach, through crimson-creeper'd plant  
And rainbow-colour'd shell, there trod the elephant.

\* And after these there came the Day and Night,  
Riding together both with equal pace,  
Th' one on a palfrey blacke, the other white.  
SPENSER—" *Færie Queen*," canto vii.

At last an orange band,  
Set in a dawn of ashen grey,  
To things that winter in that dreadful land  
Told, like a prophet, of the sun at hand ;  
And the light flickered, like an angel's sword,  
This way and that athwart the dark fiord :  
And strangely-coloured fires  
Played round magnificent cathedral spires,  
Grandly by winter of the glacier built  
With fretted shafts, by summer glory-tipped,  
And darkness was unmuffled and was ripped  
Like crape from heaven's jewelled hilt.  
Oh, those grand depths on depths that look like Fate,  
Awfully calm and uncompassionate ;  
Those nights that are but clasps, or rather say,  
Bridges of silver flung from day to day ;  
That vault which deepens up, and endeth never,  
That sea of starlit sky,  
Broadening and brightening to infinity,  
Where nothing trembles, suffers, weeps for ever.  
But still the ships were fast in the ice-field,  
And while the midnight Arctic sun outwheeled,  
Thicker and thicker did Death's shadows fall  
On the calm forehead of the Admiral.  
Oh, Admiral ! thou hadst a shrine  
Of silver, not from any earthly mine,  
Of silver ice divine—  
A sacrament, but not of bread and wine.  
Thou hadst the Book, the stars, in whose broad skies



Are truths, and silences, and mysteries—  
The love, which whoso loveth, never dies.

Brave hearts ! he cannot stay :

Only at home ye will be sure to say  
How he hath wrought, and sought, and found—found  
what ?

The bourne whence traveller returneth not !—

Ah, no ! 'tis only that his spirit high

Hath gone upon a new discovery,

A marvellous passage on a sea unbounded,

Blown by God's gentle breath ;

But that the white sail of his soul hath rounded

The promontory—Death !

\* \* \* \* \*

How shall we bury him ?

Where shall we leave the old man lying ?

With music in the distance dying—dying,

Among the arches of the Abbey grand and dim,

There, if we might, we would bury him ;

And comrades of the sea should bear his pall ;

And the great organ should let rise and fall

The requiem of Mozart, the Dead March in *Saul*—

Then, silence all !

And yet far grandlier will we bury him.

Strike the ship-bell slowly—slowly—slowly !

Sailors ! trail the colours half-mast high ;

Leave him in the face of God most holy,

Underneath the vault of Arctic sky.



Let the long, long darkness wrap him round,  
By the long sunlight be his forehead crown'd.  
For cathedral panes ablaze with stories,

For the tapers in the nave and choir,  
Give him lights auroral—give him glories,

Mingled of the rose and of the fire.

Let the wild winds, like chief mourners, walk,  
Let the stars burn o'er his catafalque.

Hush! for the breeze, and the white fog's swathing  
sweep,

I cannot hear the simple service read,  
Was it "earth to earth," the captain said,  
Or "we commit his body to the deep,  
Till seas give up their dead?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Well pleased our island-mother scans,

As mothers of heroic children use,

In things like these her silent Inkermanns,

Her voiceless Trafalgars and Waterloos.

Oh, trenches of the winter wild and black!

Oh, Balaklavas of the rolling pack!

Oh, combats on the sledge, or in the yards,

Magnificent as marches of the Guards!

Oh, dreader sights to see, and sounds to list,

Than Muscovite and gun, grey through the morning  
mist!

Ye tell our England that of many a son

Deep agonies are suffered, high deeds done.

Whereof is sparing memory or none,

That have eternity and deathless laud  
Before the starry threshold of our God ;  
And evermore in such she learns to read  
The pledge of future deed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hush ! be not overbold,  
Who dares to talk about success  
In presence of that solemn blessedness ?  
Who, but God, dares to give a martyr gold ?  
Oh, high and stately things,  
Are ye dead—defeated—still ?  
Is the lion silent on the hill ?  
Doth the he-goat lie before the fane,  
All his glory dashed with a red stain  
Dropping from the heart's deep springs ?  
Is the good hound mute upon the track ?  
Is the mail'd king borne through tears that fall like  
rain,


Drums and banners muffled up in black ?  
Is the war-ship frozen up for ever ?  
Shall the sailor see home's white cliffs never ?  
Hush ! Oh, leave him in the darkness of the land,  
Cover'd with the shadow of Christ's Hand ;  
Leave him in the midnight Arctic sun,  
God's great light o'er duty nobly done,  
God's great whiteness for the pardon won,  
Leave him waiting for the setting of the Throne,  
Leave him waiting for the trumpet to be blown.  
In God's bosom, in a land unknown,

Leave him (he needeth no lament)  
With suns, and nights, and snow ;  
Life's tragedy is more magnificent,  
Ending with that sublime and silent woe.  
'Tis well it should be so.

## THE DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D. Born 1787. Died 1863.

---

AST falls the October rain, and dull and leaden  
Stretch the low skies without one line of blue ;  
And up the desolate streets, with sobs that  
deaden  
The rolling wheels, the winds come rolling too.

Faster than rain fall tear-drops—bells are tolling ;  
The dark sky suits the melancholy heart ;  
From the church-organs awfully is rolling  
Down the draped fanes the Requiem of Mozart.

Oh, tears, beyond control of half a nation,  
Oh, sorrowful music, what have ye to say ?  
Why take men up so deep a lamentation ?  
What prince and great man hath there fallen to-day ?

Only an old Archbishop, growing whiter  
Year after year, his stature proud and tall,  
Palsied and bowed as by his heavy mitre ;  
Only an old Archbishop—that is all !

Only the hands that held with feeble shiver  
The marvellous pen—by others outstretched o'er  
The children's heads—are folded now for ever  
In an eternal quiet—nothing more !

No martyr he o'er fire and sword victorious,  
No saint in silent rapture kneeling on ;  
No mighty orator with voice so glorious,  
That thousands sigh when that sweet sound is gone.

Yet in Heaven's great Cathedral, peradventure,  
There are crowns rich above the rest, with green  
Places of joy peculiar where *they* enter,  
Whose fires and swords no eye hath ever seen.

They who have known the truth, the truth have spoken,  
With few to understand and few to praise,  
Casting their bread on waters, half heart-broken,  
For men to find it after many days.

And better far than eloquence—that golden  
And spangled juggler, dear to thoughtless youth—  
The luminous style through which there is beholden  
The honest beauty of the face of Truth.

And better than his loftiness of station,  
His power of logic, or his pen of gold,  
The half-unwilling homage of a nation  
Of fierce extremes to one who seem'd so cold.

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The purity by private ends unblotted,  
The love that slowly came with time and tears,  
The honourable age, the life unspotted,  
That are not measured merely by their years.

And better far than flowers that blow and perish  
Some sunny week, the roots deep-laid in mould  
Of quickening thoughts, which long blue summers  
cherish,  
Long after he who planted them is cold.

Yea, there be saints, who are not like the painted  
And haloed figures fixed upon the pane,  
Not outwardly and visibly ensainted,  
But hiding deep the light which they contain.

The rugged gentleness, the wit whose glory  
Flash'd like a sword because its edge was keen,  
The fine antithesis, the flowing story,  
Beneath such things the sainthood is not seen ;

Till in the hours when the wan hand is lifted  
To take the bread and wine, through all the mist  
Of mortal weariness our eyes are gifted  
To see a quiet radiance caught from Christ ;

Till from the pillow of the thinker, lying  
In weakness, comes the teaching then best taught,  
That the true crown for any soul in dying  
Is Christ, not genius ; and is faith, not thought.

Oh, wondrous lights of Death, the great unveiler,  
Lights that come out above the shadowy place,  
Just as the night that makes our small world paler,  
Shows us the star-sown amplitudes of space !

Oh, strange discovery, land that knows no bounding,  
Isles far off hailed, bright seas without a breath,  
What time the white sail of the soul is rounding  
The misty cape—the promontory Death !

Rest then, oh, martyr, passed through anguish mortal,  
Rest, then, oh Saint, sublimely free from doubt,  
Rest then, oh patient thinker, o'er the portal,  
Where there is peace for brave hearts wearied out.

Oh, long unrecognised, thy love too loving,  
Too wise thy wisdom, and thy truth too free !  
As on the teachers after truth are moving,  
They may look backward with deep thanks to thee.

By his dear Master's holiness made holy,  
All lights of hope upon that forehead broad,  
Ye mourning thousands, quit the minster slowly,  
And leave the great Archbishop with his God.

## HIS NAME.

---



WONDERFUL ! round whose birth-hour  
Prophetic song, miraculous power,  
Cluster and burn, like star and flower,

Those marvellous rays that at Thy will,  
From the closed Heaven which is so chill,  
So passionless, stream'd round Thee still,

Are but as broken gleams that start,  
O Light of lights, from Thy deep heart,  
Thyself, Thyself, the Wonder art !

O Counsellor ! four thousand years,  
One question tremulous with tears,  
One awful question, vex'd our peers.

They ask'd the vault, but no one spoke ;  
They ask'd the depth, no answer woke ;  
They ask'd their hearts, that only broke.

They look'd, and sometimes on the height  
Far off they saw a haze of white,  
That was a storm, but look'd like light.



The secret of the years is read,  
The enigma of the quick and dead  
By the Child voice interpreted.

O everlasting Father, God!  
Sun after sun went down, and trod  
Race after race the green earth's sod,

Till generations seem'd to be  
But dead waves of an endless sea,  
But dead leaves from a deathless tree.

But Thou hast come, and now we know  
Each wave hath an eternal flow,  
Each leaf a lifetime after snow.

O Prince of Peace ! crown'd yet discrown'd,  
They say no war nor battle's sound  
Was heard the tirèd world around ;

They say the hour that Thou didst come,  
The trumpet's voice was stricken dumb,  
And no one beat the battle-drum.

Yea, still as life to them that mark  
Its poor adventure seems a bark,  
Whose track is pale, whose sail is dark :

Thou who art Wonderful dost fling  
One ray, till like a sea-bird's wing  
The canvas is a snowy thing,—

Till the dark boat is turn'd to gold,  
The sunlit-silver'd ocean roll'd  
With anthems that are new and old,

With noble path of luminous ray  
From the boat slanting all the way  
To the island of undying day.

And still as clouding questions swarm  
Around our hearts, and dimly form  
Their problems of the mist and storm :

And still as ages fleet, but fraught  
With syllables, whereby is wrought  
The fulness of the Eternal thought ;


And when not yet in God's sunshine,  
The smoke drifts from the embattled line  
Of warring hearts that would be Thine ;

We bid our doubts and passions cease,  
Our restless fears be still'd with these—  
Counsellor, Father, Prince of Peace !

CHRISTMAS, 1866.

A DIRGE, IN MEMORIAM, R. W. A.\*

---

OW sleep they in their gory bed  
So many thousand miles away,  
By Meerut's camp, by Jumna red,  
And where the marvellous fountains play

On Delhi's terraces of snow,  
'Mid arches carved of scented wood,  
And stately mosque rear'd long ago,  
Red as their own red creed of blood?

Here—in the churchyard's calm embrace,  
We lay our loved ones down to rest,  
With white flowers round each whiter face,  
And light green turf upon their breast.

We give them to the ocean's waves  
With such a wealth of prayers and psalms,  
As well might soothe him when he raves,  
And turn to music all his calms.

\* Robert Waller Alexander, Captain 3rd Reg. N. I., killed in action before Delhi, June 19, 1857.

And mothers close their babies' eyes,  
And gently touch each delicate part,  
And when the boy beloved dies,  
He sinks upon a father's heart.

With all that love can do to keep  
From ruder pains, or pains allay,  
How did our darlings fall asleep  
Those thousand thousand miles away?

What answer, men of bloody hands,  
From forts all black with English guns,  
When injured England loud demands  
Her spotless daughters and her sons?

What answer for your demon deeds,  
Your traitorous tongues, your ruthless ire?  
A nation's heart in anguish bleeds,  
A nation's soul is all on fire.

That generous heart, still sure to be  
Friend of the weak against the strong,  
That soul of stainless chivalry,  
That kindles at a woman's wrong.

What answer to her outraged pride,  
For that black blot upon her shield,  
That ne'er was dealt where warriors ride,  
That ne'er was won in battle-field?

What answer from those hundred homes,  
Where eyes are red and cheeks are pale,  
And the long sickening heart-thrill comes  
Of horror at each dreadful tale ?


Now calmly on our western isles  
The shortening day of autumn sinks,  
And gorgeous sunsets heap their piles  
Of molten ore on mountain brinks.

The hills are tinctured with a glow  
Of paly gold ; the woods grow red ;  
The shadows in the lake below  
Lie still like pictures of the dead.

Ah, sweet wild lake ! yet gazing down  
Thy quiet scene, mine eyes run o'er—  
The heart makes landscapes of its own—  
I see a brown and burning shore :

For fields of corn, the jungle wild ;  
For lowing herd, the shriek of war ;  
For gold-red clouds at sunset piled,  
Torn crimson banners streaming far ;

And down the vale a solemn dirge,  
A long lament that makes me start,  
Comes duly as thy swelling surge  
Sets from the great Atlantic's heart.



O youth ! that love had died to save,  
 O manly valour ! burning deep,  
 Lay youth and valour in the grave,  
 And love alone be left to weep ;

And grief alone be left to sing—  
 The night is dark on Jumna's shore ;  
 I hear the rifle's short sharp ring,  
 I hear the cannon's deadly roar.

And where the squadrons, hotly driven  
 Back from the charge, like storm waves dash,  
 There is one white face turn'd to Heaven,  
 A sheathless sword, a bloody sash.

Green sea ! from rocks bedew'd with foam,  
 From shoals beneath thy waters laid,  
 Thou bearest still some relics home,  
 Spars of the wrecks that thou hast made.

And love perchance may win from death  
 Some charm to soothe her grief's unrest,  
 The soldier's sword without a sheath,  
 The Bible that his hand has press'd.

The blotted letter that we prize,  
 As life were in the lifeless scrawl,  
 And the lost light of those dear eyes  
 Look'd from the lines,—and that is all.

Not all—not all—the purple hills  
Take up the moaning of the main,  
From their proud heights of heather thrills  
A grander burden to the strain.

No echo theirs of sorrowing groans,  
No voice of tears beside a tomb,  
They tell from their eternal thrones  
A greater purpose thro' the gloom.

O weeping Love! lo! Love divine,  
Still giving natural sorrow scope,  
With human eyes looks into thine,  
And bids thee grieve not without hope.

Christ from his place at God's right hand,  
Christ from the jasper walls of Heaven,  
Was looking on that pitiless band,  
Was walking with His own forgiven.

He knew Himself a darker hour—  
Felt what He ne'er can feel again,  
The cruel scorn of lawless power,  
And the strange mystery of pain.

No weary load that man lays down  
Of sin or woe but He takes up;  
And bearing many a golden crown,  
Remembers still the cross and cup.

He knoweth well what spirits tried  
Close, close to Him in anguish clung,  
What brave young martyrs nobly died  
With His dear name upon their tongue.

Beautiful babes with golden hair,  
That well might melt a felon's mood,  
Fair women—ah ! how vainly fair,  
They bore His cross in shame and blood.

Surely their loud and bitter cry  
Pierced through the full angelic choirs,  
And He came down that burning sky,  
Sickened with blood and red with fires.

He took them from the torturing knife,  
He took them from the murderer's hand,  
Out of the terror and the strife,  
Unto some bright delicious land ;

Where, till His own dread judgment hour,  
He giveth His beloved sleep,  
Safe from the battle's bloody shower,  
Nor vexing at the tears we weep.

Sleep, brother ! sleep where Delhi's guns  
Have ploughed the earth for many a space ;  
Soon left to dews and burning suns,  
Thy grave shall be a lonely place.




And habit holds us in her chain ;  
    Around our knees our children play,  
And we shall learn to smile again,  
    As night succeeds to busy day.

While all the time some Eastern star  
    At night looks on our soldier's grave,  
And gales at morn from Shalamar  
    The tall palmyras come to wave.

But ever there a sunbeam waits,  
    And ever there a shadow falls—  
The gleam is from the pearly gates,  
    The shadow from the golden walls.

ON READING SOME LINES BY W. A.  
BUTLER.

---

S when at night we tread the lonely deck,  
In the first hour of moonlight on the wave,  
Far, far away, the watcher marks some streak  
Which dying day hath pencilled o'er his grave ;

So more than living lights, beyond all fair  
In living genius, is departed worth ;  
Man's spirit makes love-tokens of whate'er  
Hath come from genius, now no more on earth.

As in a gold-clasped volume closely hid,  
The pale, pale leaves of some remembered rose,  
Dating the heart's deep chronicles unbid,  
Suggest more thought than all that greenly grows :

As in the winter from some marble jar,  
Whose sides are honeyed with a rosy breath,  
You catch faint footfalls of the Spring afar,  
And find a memory in the scent of death :

So these the characters of Butler's pen,  
     Are more to us than all that day by day  
 Are traced by mightiest hands of living men,  
     'Tis death that makes them more esteemed than they.

'Tis not because the affluent fancy flung  
     Such pearls of price ungrudging at thy feet,  
 'Tis not because that blessèd poet sung  
     His Heavenly Master's truth in words so sweet.

No, 'tis because the heavy churchyard mould  
     Lies on the dear one in that lonely dell,  
 Lies on the hand that held the pen of gold,  
     The brain that thought so wisely and so well.

Nay, say not so ;—write epitaphs like these  
     For sons of song who fling light words abroad,  
 Whose art is cankered with a sore disease,  
     Who feed a flame that tends not up to God.

But *he*, the empurpled cross with healing shadow,  
     Was the great measure of the much he knew,  
 'Twas this he saw on mountain and on meadow,  
     The only beautiful, the sternly true.

Not vague to him the great Laudate, still  
     Stirring the strong ones of the water flood,  
 And the deep heart of many an ancient hill,  
     And light-hung chords of every vocal wood.

Not dark the language written on the wide  
Marmoreal ocean,—written on the sky,  
On the scarred volume of the mountain side,  
On many-pagèd flowers that lowly lie.

Nor dark, nor vague—not nature, but her God,  
Nor only nature's God, but Three in One,  
Father, Redeemer, Comforter—bestowed  
On hearts made temples by the Incarnate Son.

All sweetest strains rang hollow to his ear,  
Wanting this key-note. Earthy, of the earth,  
Seeming like beauty to the eye of fear,  
Like the wild anguish of a harlot's mirth.

True Poet—true Philosopher, to whom  
Beauty was one with truth, and truth with beauty,  
True Priest—no flow'rs so sweet upon thy tomb  
As those pure blossoms won from rugged duty.

He might have sung as precious songs as e'er  
Made our tongue golden since its earliest burst,  
But those poetic wreaths him seemed less fair  
Than moral truth, o'er science wide dispersed.

He might have read man's nature deeper far  
Than any since his broad-browed namesake died,  
But like those Eastern Sages, so the star  
He followed—till he found the cradle side.

And now, ye mountains, and ye voiceful streams,  
For your interpreter ye need not weep,  
On the Eternal hills fall brighter gleams,  
Down Eden more delightful rivers sweep.

Friends, kinsmen, fellow-churchmen, fellow-men,  
Yes—ye may weep, but be it not for him ;  
Life might have brought him larger lore—what then ?  
It would have kept him from the cherubim.

Dear hand, dear lines, in them still undeparted  
I hear the voice of one before the throne,—  
Butler, the childlike, and the gentle-hearted,  
Taken so young by Him who takes His own.

## A FINE DAY IN PASSION WEEK.

---

**T**HERE is a rapturous movement, a green growing  
Among the hills and valleys once again,  
And silent rivers of delight are flowing  
Into the hearts of men.

There is a purple weaving on the heather,  
Night drops down starry gold upon the furze,  
Wild rivers and wild birds sing songs together,  
Dead nature breathes and stirs.

Is this the season when our hearts should follow  
The Man of Sorrows to the hill of scorn?  
Must not our pilgrim grief be scant and hollow  
On such a sunny morn?

Will not the silver trumpet of the river  
Wind us to gladsomeness against our will?  
The subtle eloquence of sunlight shiver  
What sadness haunts us still?

If I might choose, those notes should all be duller,  
That silver trump should fail in Passion week ;  
The mountain-crowning sky wear one pale colour,  
Pale as my Saviour's cheek.

And day and night there should be one slow raining  
With mournful splash, upon the moor and moss,  
And on the hill one tree its bare arms straining,  
Bare as my Saviour's cross.

Nay ! if thy heart were sorrowful exceeding,  
Its pulses big with that divinest woe,  
These natural things would only set it bleeding  
To think it could be so ;

To think that guilty and degraded Nature  
Could look as joyful as she looketh now,  
When the warm blood has dropp'd from her Creator  
Upon her branded brow.

## A FINE DAY BY LOUGH SWILLY.

---

**S**OFT slept the beautiful Autumn  
In the heart, on the face of the lough—  
Its heart, whose pulses were hush'd,  
Till you knew the life of the tide  
But by a wash on the shore,  
A whisper, like whispering leaves  
In green abysses of forest—  
Its face, whose violet melted,  
Melted in roseate gold—  
Roses and violets dying  
Into a silver mystery  
Of soft impalpable haze.  
Calm lay the woodlands of Fahan :  
The summer was gone, yet it lay  
On the gently yellowing leaves  
Like a beautiful poem, whose tones  
Are mute, whose words are forgot,  
But its music sleepeth for ever  
Within the music of thought.  
The robin sang from the ash,



The sunset's pencils of gold  
No longer wrote their great lines  
On the boles of the odorous limes,  
Or bathed the tree-tops in glory ;  
But a soft strange radiance there hung  
In splinters of tenderest light.  
And those who looked from Glengollen  
Saw the purple wall of the Scalp,  
As if through an old church-window  
Stain'd with a marvellous blue.  
From the snow-white shell-strand of Inch  
You could not behold the white horses  
Lifting their glittering backs,  
Tossing their manes on Dunree,  
And the battle-boom of Macammish  
Was lull'd in the delicate air.  
As in old pictures the smoke  
Goes up from Abraham's pyre,  
So the smoke went up from Rathmullen;  
And beyond the trail of the smoke  
Was a great deep fiery abyss  
Of molten gold in the sky,  
And it set a far tract up the waters  
Ablaze with gold like its own.  
Over the fire of the sea,  
Over the chasm in the sky,  
My spirit, as by a bridge  
Of wonder, went wandering on,  
And lost its way in the heaven.

---

The ship is out on the lake,  
The fisherman stands on the deck.

Rosy and violet sea ;  
Silver haze in the distance ;  
Woodlands softer than summer's ;  
Great golden eye of intense,  
Concentrated, marvellous light ;  
Mysterious suggestions of thought ;  
Beautiful yearnings of fancy ;  
Wonderful imaginations ;  
Throbs of the being immortal  
Who, prison'd deep in the heart,  
Looks through the bars of the flesh :—

What reckoneth he of them all ?

So to the reasonless eye  
The Master's picture is only  
A heap of colouring flat,  
A strange confusion of strokes.  
And thought, and study, and books,  
And fine traditions of taste,  
Are the glasses through which we survey  
The beauty of natural things,  
Till stars come splendidly out  
That our eyes would have never beheld ;  
And cultured association  
Hangeth to things that we see  
Hints and prophetic types,

Shadows grand and immortal,  
Sacraments dim and delightful  
Of the things that the eye hath not seen.

O this ship and ocean of life !—  
I, like the fisherman's boy  
On this awful, beautiful sea,  
Gaze on a glory for ever,  
That I love not, nor know, as I ought—  
Sail on a beautiful deep,  
Hear the soft washing of waves  
That set to the shore of our God—  
Look on purpureal hills,  
Look on exquisite woods,  
Soft, and most solemn and stately—  
Sail towards the gate of the heaven,  
Yet know it not, nor consider !

Hues more radiant by far  
Than the Autumn ever could give  
Move round my wondrous existence,  
The daily deep of my life :  
Prospects of things that shall be  
In the country over the waves—  
Memories, sorrows, and thoughts—  
Noble and beautiful words,  
Deeds that darkly reveal  
The transparent, measureless depth  
Of the soul of our nature's Redeemer !

O for the day that shall teach me  
To know their meaning at last,  
Beyond the lake of this life,  
Beyond the gate of the sunset  
Upon the hyaline sea !

## BELOW AND ABOVE.

---



OWN below the wild November whistling  
Through the beech's dome of burning red,  
And the Autumn sprinkling penitential  
Dust and ashes on the chestnut's head.

Down below a pall of airy purple,  
Darkly hanging from the mountain side,  
And the sunset from his eyebrow staring  
O'er the long roll of the leaden tide.

Up above the tree with leaf unfading  
By the everlasting river's brink,  
And the sea of glass, beyond whose margin  
Never yet the sun was known to sink.

Down below the white wings of the sea-bird,  
Dash'd across the furrows dark with mould,  
Flitting with the memories of our childhood  
Through the trees now waxen pale and old.

Down below imaginations quivering  
Through our human spirits like the wind,  
Thoughts that toss like leaves about the woodland,  
Hopes like sea-birds flash'd across the mind.

Up above the host no man can number,  
In white robes, a palm in every hand,  
Each some work sublime for every working,  
In the spacious tracts of that great land.

Up above the thoughts that know not anguish,  
Tender care, sweet love for us below,  
Noble pity free from anxious terror,  
Larger love without a touch of woe.

Down below a sad mysterious music,  
Wailing through the woods and on the shore,  
Burden'd with a grand majestic secret  
That keeps sweeping from us evermore.

Up above a music that entwineth  
With eternal threads of golden sound  
The great poem of this strange existence,  
All whose wondrous meaning hath been found.

Down below the Church to whose poor window,  
Glory by the autumnal trees is lent,  
And a knot of worshippers in mourning,  
Missing some one at the Sacrament.

Up above the burst of Hallelujah,  
And (without the sacramental mist  
Wrapt around us like a sunlit halo)  
The great vision of the face of Christ.

Down below cold sunlight on the tombstones,  
And the green wet turf with faded flowers,  
Winter roses, once like young hopes burning,  
Now beneath the ivy dripp'd with showers.

And the new-made grave within the churchyard,  
And the white cap on that young face pale,  
And the watcher ever as it dusketh  
Rocking to and fro with that long wail.

Up above a crown'd and happy spirit,  
Like an infant in the eternal years,  
Who shall grow in love and light for ever  
Order'd in his place among his peers.

O the sobbing of the winds of autumn,  
And the sunset streak of stormy gold,  
And the poor heart thinking in the churchyard,  
"Night is coming, and the grave is cold."

O the pale and splash'd and sodden roses,  
And the desolate heart that grave above,  
And the white cap shaking as it darkens  
Round that shrine of memory and love.


O the rest for ever, and the rapture,  
And the hand that wipes the tears away,  
And the golden homes beyond the sunset,  
And the hope that watches o'er the clay!

*All Saints' Day, 1857.*



LINES WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF  
POSTHUMOUS SERMONS.

---

 S a child in a quiet place  
Which earth's wild whirl hath hardly stirr'd  
Grows shy as some fair forest bird,  
And feareth every stranger's face,

And wots not what a world there is  
Of love beyond his little isle,  
Half jealous of his father's smile,  
Half jealous of his mother's kiss ;

But when he leaves that strip of strand,  
Life's larger continent to explore,  
He findeth friends on the far shore,  
And graspeth many a brother's hand :

So may I deem it fares with thee—  
So may I think that thou hast found,  
O man of God ! who standest crown'd  
With glory on the crystal sea !

Where all the harps are heavenly sweet,  
 Where all the palms are passing green;  
 Where on all faces falls the sheen  
 From the temple of the golden street,

Are hands thou never thought'st would fold  
 The heavenly harp, the fadeless palm;  
 And faces most divinely calm  
 Thou never thoughtest to behold.

Forgive, if in thy textual art  
 I see thee what thou art not now,  
 With something of a narrow brow  
 And something of a narrow heart;

If any buds that thou hast strewn  
 To me look dry for lack of showers,  
 And scentless as Platonic flowers,  
 Pale white beneath the pale white moon.\*

For still I think in worlds'above  
 The narrow brow grows bright and broad  
 With the great purposes of God,  
 And the heart widens with His love.

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\* Platonici flores quosdam etiam lunæ dicunt esse familiares, qui sanè huic sideri canant hymnos.—SCALIGER, *De Subtil. Ec.* 170.

And the poor thoughts, on earth so pale,  
 Turn to the sun his warmth to win,  
 And drink the silent sunbeams in,  
 And hue and fragrance never fail.


Sure at thy creed confest erewhile,  
 Now with large heart and lovelit eye  
 Thou sighest—if the blessed sigh ;  
 Thou smilest—if the blessed smile.

Thou smilest at the glory given  
 To those innumerable kings,  
 And putttest away thy childish things,  
 Taught by the manly love of Heaven ;

For whilst that thou wert here below,  
 From that thick-thorn'd belief of thine  
 Thy spirit push'd some flowers divine,  
 Like furze that flowers in frost and snow.

And as when finest fancies troop  
 Across the painter's haunted soul,  
 He draws the outline first in coal  
 Before he lets his pencil droop

With colour like the sky above—  
 So dark the sketch thy heart had drawn,  
 But now it wears the rose-red dawn,  
 Or floats in pale gold mists of love.



So let me think for evermore,  
Yea let me say beside the sea,  
"God's love is chanting loud to me,  
And singing grandly on the shore."

And say, when all the stars are high,  
"It is our Father's ancient book;  
How many myriad myriads look  
On His love-letters of the sky!"

And say, where anguish never sleeps,  
Staring upon the city wall,  
Where, shaking in her gaudy shawl,  
On the door-step the harlot weeps,—

"Father! I know Thee good as just!  
O Dove Divine, I hear Thy wings  
Come rustling round these faded things,  
And dropping dew upon their dust!

"I hear Thee whispering unto sin,  
I see Thee in the flower-like thought  
That groweth in such hearts unsought,  
For which they neither toil nor spin.

"I see, too, where with lifted hands  
Amidst all shapes of human woe,  
A heavenly shadow on life's snow,  
The Christus Consolator stands."


So let me say, and let me feel  
That my dear Father's holy eye  
Looks love on all beneath the sky,  
That He is willing all should kneel.

And let me hope that trembling souls  
May enter Heaven from this cold world,  
Like poor birds by the snow-wind hurl'd  
In where the great church organ rolls :

Although they know not where they fly,  
Although they open their dim eyes,  
All panting with the great surprise,  
The grand and awful harmony.

## A THOUGHT FOR THE ROYAL BRIDAL.

---

LL winter long  
I tarried in a strange, monotonous land,  
Among pine-forests,—an eternal throng  
Of green plumes, changeless o'er the changeless sand,  
Whereto the ocean singeth one sole song,  
Heard swinging heavily by sun or star,  
On its Biscayan bar.

But with the Spring  
I see the mountains topp'd with sunny white,  
Like silver clouds beyond imagining,  
Rise in the cloudless blue, and day or night  
'Tis sweet to hear clear-water'd Adour sing,  
And watch the shadows which far forests throw  
On Pyrenean snow.

All the year through  
There hung a grand monotony of grief  
O'er England, ever quiet, ever true ;  
Speeches and elegies perchance were brief,  
But voices faltered, till the whole world knew

She mourn'd her Prince, from evil tongues secure,  
Because his heart was pure.

Worthy to bear  
Half the Crown's crushing burden in the State  
Where monarchy but cometh forth more fair  
From fires of revolution, where to fate  
The King may yield; but still the throne is there,  
As drops that make the rainbow on the river  
Perish—the rainbow never!

But lo! with Spring  
(I will not say our grief hath fled for good,  
But it is time-touch'd to a gentler thing),  
The Princess comes, whose noble womanhood  
Is better than the circlet of a King:  
Surely young grass and flowers are clothing now  
The furrows of God's plough.

Oh! Princess, come!  
Come, Princess! in the war-ship o'er the wave;  
Come, Princess! o'er the favourable foam;  
With blazing streets, with banners of the brave,  
With arches they will hail thee to thy home;  
With these, and the long thunders of the cheers  
Falling in rain of tears.

In tears! in tears!  
Remembering who, with pageantry as grand,

Pass'd through the acclaim of people and of peers,  
When, with the princely spouse at her right hand,  
She went in state among the endless cheers,  
And "let her people see her" as she roll'd  
On, in a cloud of gold.

Sweet lady, pass  
On to St. George's Chapel. Wear as free  
Thy royal jewels, in a starry mass  
Cluster'd, as doth some bride of low degree  
Her wreath from orchard or from meadow-grass.  
Surely, when joy so trembles to a tear,  
The dead are strangely near.

From where his true  
Heart-love of beauty feeds on the uncreated  
And ancient beauty that is ever new ;  
Where his deep thirst for purity is sated,  
And his high soul hath found a work to do  
Sublimar than the work on earth he wrought,  
And full of nobler thought ;

Surely one spirit,  
Full of a tender care that is not dread,  
Full of sweet love that doth no touch inherit  
Of fear or woe—one of the living dead,  
Stoed in the robe made white by Christ's dear merit,  
With benediction for the princely pair,  
Stands on the altar stair.



Here, missing sore  
Old England, and her streets ablaze with lights,  
The illumination, when the day is o'er,  
Shall be the splendours that on starry nights  
From silver snows stream to heaven's silver floor;  
And for a nation's cheers, the silent prayer  
Breathed on the mountain air.

BAGNÈRES DE BIGORRE.

WAVES, WAVES, WAVES.

---



WAVES, waves, waves,

Graceful arches lit with night's pale gold,

Boom like thunder through the mountain  
roll'd,

Hiss, and make their music manifold,

Sing, and work for God along the strand.

Leaves, leaves, leaves,

Beautified by Autumn's withering breath,

Ivory skeletons carven fair by death,

Float and drift at a sublime command.

Thoughts, thoughts, thoughts,

Beating wave-like on the mind's strange shore,

Rustling leaf-like, through it evermore—

Oh, that they might follow God's good hand !

## EPITAPH OF R. H. IN DERRY CATHEDRAL.

---




OWN through our crowded lanes, and closer air,  
O friend, how beautiful thy footsteps were;  
When through the fever's waves of fire they  
trod,

A form was with thee like the Son of God.  
'Twas but one step for those victorious feet  
From their day's walk unto the golden street;  
And they who watch'd that walk, so bright and brief,  
Have mark'd this marble with their hope and grief.

## INSCRIPTION

FOR THE STATUE ERECTED TO CAPTAIN BOYD,  
IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN.


---

AFE from the rocks whence swept thy manly  
form,

The tide's white rush, the stepping of the storm,  
Borne with a public pomp by just decree,  
Heroic sailor ! from that fatal sea,  
A city vows this marble unto thee.  
And here, in this calm place, where never din  
Of earth's great waterfloods shall enter in,  
Where to our human hearts two thoughts are given,  
One Christ's self-sacrifice, the other Heaven ;  
Here is it meet for grief and love to grave  
The Christ-taught bravery that died to save,  
The life not lost, but found beneath the wave.

## THE SYMBOLS OF PROPHECY.

---

HAT boot such symbols? As the ocean-frith,  
What time the purpling sea-swell is struck  
dumb,

Auguring what way the whistling winds may blow,  
Suspends his course, working for many a rood,  
So fluctuates our age, a doubtful tide.  
These emblems tell that a divinest wind  
Shall onward roll the heaving of the seas,  
And send them washing with a shout to God.  
What boot such symbols? ask we once again.  
For some authentic news from God we pant,  
To tell that history, that silent river,  
Flows nobly from her fountain-head in God.  
These last-day summers are adust with doubt—  
The silver rain of prophecy still drops  
To lay the blowing dust of human thought.  
What boot such symbols? Music and the palm,  
Onyx and chrysoprase and amethyst.  
Were it not better seek some other love,  
Profounder and more intellectual hope?

Ah, we love green, and Heaven is rich with green ;  
Music, and Heaven's shore shakes with anthemings ;  
And we love glory, and the saints are crown'd ;  
Liberty, and aye open are the gates  
Of the great city that lies four-square, to give  
An avenue to every human heart.  
Variety, and leaves and fruits and gems  
Blaze there, and bloom twelve-mannered, evermore.  
Ah me ! we have been too much men on earth :  
Let us in Heaven be children once again.

## THE CLOSE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

---

**A**FTER the wild winds roaring all the night,  
A little bird's sweet singing at the dawn ;  
After the great white horse's tramp along  
Froth-palsied shores, the ripple's pleasant chime ;  
After sea-winds that like a hammer smite  
The shrouds, a murmuring in them as of leaves,  
Of leaves about a sunny cottage home—  
Of rustling leaves, or silver sliding rain :  
O sweet, sweet, sweet, is quiet after such,  
Songs after storm, and ripples after surge,  
And humming in the sails when breezes lull.  
After the seals a silence up in Heaven,  
After the trumpet blasts a truce of God,  
After the vial's *consummatum est*,  
After the wails and fires of Babylon,  
The Requiescat of these restless hearts,  
New Heaven, new earth, and no more curse at all.

## LINES

ON A STATUE OF THE LATE SIR R. A. FERGUSON, BART.,  
M.P., THEN ABOUT TO BE PLACED IN THE PRINCIPAL  
SQUARE OF LONDONDERRY.—*Sept. 13th, 1862.*

---

AH ! raise it up.

Raise up the statue in the storied town,  
Make it a sign of sorrow and renown,  
Like flags that tell us where a ship goes down.

Ah ! raise it up.

Raise up the statue in the quiet square,  
Crowning the street which rises like a stair  
Up from the river in the gloom or glare.

And let it front,

At eve or dawn, or with a nameless charm  
Of mystic darkness on its silver arm,  
The Foyle that brims and brightens by The Farm.

Why raise it up ?

Where are the great lines there that we may seek,  
As of the statesman with pale brow and cheek,  
As of the senator in act to speak ?



Not such are here,  
If life-drawn truth have moulded it—not such,  
If inspiration, by some happy touch,  
Hath stamp'd in bronze the presence loved so much.

Yet raise it up :  
Methinks the shaggy brow speaks honest scorn,  
And sharp and kindly as a frosty morn,  
Is the man's wholesome influence re-born.

Ah ! raise it up,  
Show us the rugged gentleness, the true eyes  
Of him who never wrought for place or prize,  
Who lacked the golden eloquence that lies !

Ah ! raise it up  
And let it tell, as far as sculpture can,  
For those who have congenial hearts to scan  
The noble quietness of an honest man.

Yet scarcely tell—  
The lines that gather on that kindly brow,  
The cares that wither, and the pains that bow :  
*He* has forgotten them and we will now.

And often here,  
Come from the heather'd hill where, ever higher,  
Summer by summer creeps the yellow fire  
Of the ripe corn right up the mountain spire,

And often here,  
Come from the chamber where the Commons meet,  
Peasant and stately gentleman shall greet  
A face they know, a presence sadly sweet.

Ah me! Ah me!  
The souls in white, who with a single aim  
Have wrought or thought for us; they may not claim  
Or care to hear the echoes of their name.

They may not heed  
If men remember them or not, below—  
Earth's bells are muffled with a wondrous snow,  
And are not heard across the river's flow.


Yet raise it up,  
Raise up the statue in this rough dark clime,  
For him who lived in such a land, and time;  
Whose life, and not his speeches, was sublime.

## SONNETS.

---

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS.

I.

HAT be his dreams in Patmòs? O'er the seas  
Looks he towards Athens, where the very fall  
Of Grecian sunlight is Platonical?  
Or peradventure towards the Cyclades,  
The Delian earth-star ray'd with laurel trees.  
From ribbon'd baskets, where Demeter threw  
Flowers the colour of the country blue  
Oat-garlanded in Paros, or where bees  
Humming o'er Amalthea, who fed Zeus  
With goat-milk, goldenly the forest starr'd,  
While rosy purple apples, full of juice,  
Laugh'd in the grassy horn—where Naxos-ward  
Flush'd Dionysus driven o'er the brine  
Ivied the mast, and cream'd the crimson wine.

II.

Not fancies of the soft Ionian clime,  
Nor thoughts on Plato's page that greener grew  
Than grew the plane trees by the pleasant flow

Of the Ilyssus in the summer time,  
Came to the Galilean with sweet chime.  
Blanch'd in the blaze of Syrian sunsets, lo !  
He gazes on Gennesareth, aglow  
Within its golden mountain cup sublime.  
The sunset comes. Behind the Roman tower  
The dark boat's circled topsails shift and swell ;  
The tunic'd boatmen dip their nets an hour,  
And the sun goeth down on Jezreel.  
Quench'd is the flickering furnace of the dust,  
The mountains branded as with red gold rust.


## III.

But ere Heaven's cressets burn along its plain,  
The Master comes. And as a man all night  
Lull'd in a room full-fronting ocean's might,  
First waking sees a whiteness on his pane,  
A little dawning whiteness, then again  
A little line, insufferably bright,  
Edging the ripples orbing on outright  
Until the glory he should scarce sustain ;  
And as a mighty city far off kenn'd  
Although the same from each new height and glen  
Looks strangely different to the merchantmen,  
Who in long files towards its ramparts wend :  
So to St. John's deep meditative eye  
That nature grew to God's own majesty.

---

## FROM ST. AUGUSTINE.

## I.

HAT love I when I love Thee, O my God?  
Not corporal beauty, not the limb of snow,  
Nor of loved light the white and pleasant flow,  
Nor manna showers, nor strains that stream abroad,  
Nor flowers of Heaven, nor small stars of the sod :  
Not these, my God ! I love, who love Thee so.  
Yet love I something sweeter than I know ;  
A certain light on a more golden road,  
A somewhat not of manna, nor the hive,  
A beauty not of Summer or the Spring,  
A scent, a music, and a blossoming,  
Eternal, timeless, placeless without gyve,  
Fair, fadeless, undiminished, ever dim,  
This, this is what I love in loving Him.


## II.

This, this is what I love, and what is This ?  
I asked the beautiful earth, who said, " Not I."  
I asked the depths, and the immaculate sky,  
And all the spaces said, " Not He but His."  
And so, like one who scales a precipice,  
Height after height, I scaled the flaming ball  
Of the great universe ; yea, passed o'er all  
The world of thought which so much higher is.

Then I exclaim'd; to whom is mute all murmur  
Of phantasy, of nature, and of art,  
He than articulate language hears a firmer  
And grander meaning in his own deep heart,  
No sound from cloud or angel. Oh, to win  
That voiceless voice, "My Servant, enter in!"

---

## MY POEMS.

 NEVER yet heard music howe'er sweet,  
Never saw flower or light, ocean or hill,  
But a quick thought of something finer still  
Touch'd me with sadness. Never did I meet  
Completed beauty but was incomplete,  
Never view'd shape half fair enough to fill  
The royal galleries of my boundless will.  
Never wrote I one line that I could greet  
A twelvemonth after with a brow of fire.  
Thus then with aim unreach'd, thought unexpress'd,  
Unsatiated throbbings of desire,  
I walk my way of life, and find no rest.  
Thus beauty doth not soothe me, and a cry  
Of some deep want ends all my poetry.



PART II.



CRITICAL ESSAYS.




*[The two following Lectures were delivered in the Museum of Industry, Stephen's Green, Dublin, in the years 1864 and 1868. They formed part of two courses of the Annual Dublin "Afternoon Lectures upon Literature and Art."]*

## VICTOR HUGO.

### LA LÉGENDE DES SIÈCLES.

---

HE space which has been occupied in the present series of lectures by criticisms upon poetry need, I think, afford no just cause for regret. The assertion that a taste for poetry is, (as Wordsworth has said,) something different from a taste for sherry ; that there are certain laws by which a poem, like every other work of art, must ultimately stand or fall, is perhaps peculiarly important at this moment and in this place.


The poetry of Victor Hugo must, upon the present occasion, be represented to you exclusively by the last colossal production of his old age, “*La Légende des Siècles*.” It will be necessary for me to state, in the first instance, that general argument of the work which its writer has put forward. This will be followed by a sketch of the chief successive cycles into which the poem is arranged. I shall accompany this portion of my lecture by some translations in English verse. An attempt to appreciate the author’s place as a poet will occupy the closing part of my address. I wish it to be distinctly understood, that my remarks to-day are strictly limited by the Legend of the Ages. The faults,

like the merits, of this remarkable production are peculiar to itself, and criticisms, which might be inadmissible, if applied to M. Hugo's poetry generally, are well founded in reference to this poem.

I. Of "*La Légende des Siècles*," its author tells us that it is not so much a fragment as a leaf. It is to his entire conception what the first page is to the book, the peristyle to the edifice, the overture to the symphony, the tree to the forest. His object, as announced by himself, is to represent Humanity as one moral being, with Progress for the real, though sometimes almost impalpable link, which unites the various portions of its history.

Humanity has two aspects, the historical and the legendary, of which the last is in one sense as true as the former. It is the legendary side of the medal which the Legend of the Ages is intended to exhibit, with a careful preservation, however, of historical colouring.

The author's project is stated to be a great poem, representing existence under its triple category—Humanity, or Progress: the Relative, or Evil: the Absolute, or God. Each of these categories is to have its giant epopee. "*La Légende des Siècles*" represents only the first, and is to be followed by two others, whose titles are to be, "*The End of Satan*," and "*God*." This programme indicates significantly enough that the poet belongs to that Hegelian school, which considers evil as partial and relative good.



This framework is filled up by poems, chiefly historical, distributed into sixteen cycles, extending from the Creation to the Trump of Judgment.

The first set of poems is grouped together as "D'Eve à Jésus." The pieces, with two exceptions, are upon scriptural subjects.

The author is plainly not quite at home upon sacred ground. The "Heavenly Muse," I will not say of David and Isaiah—but of Dante, Calderon, Milton, and Keble, has never visited him. He knows the Bible only as he knows Herodotus or Ossian, Sismondi or Can temir. To write greatly upon Christian themes a man must feel as a Christian. M. Hugo's Christianity, I fear, has been but a short parenthesis in his life, inserted by the Abbé Lamennais and the Duc de Rohan, between the Voltairean influence of his mother, and the Saint-Simonian Pantheism of his later years.

I have translated the poem which seems to me to be the most pleasing of the series.

#### BOAZ ASLEEP.

At work within his barn since very early,  
Fairly tired out with toiling all the day,  
Upon the small bed where he always lay  
Boaz was sleeping by his sacks of barley.

Barley and wheat-fields he possessed, and well,  
Though rich, loved justice ; wherefore all the flood  
That turned his mill-wheels was unstained with mud,  
And in his smithy blazed no fire of hell.

His beard was silver, as in April all  
A stream may be ; he did not grudge a stook.  
When the poor gleaner pass'd, with kindly look,  
Quoth he, " Of purpose let some handfuls fall."

He walk'd his way of life straight on and plain,  
With justice clothed, like linen white and clean,  
And ever rustling towards the poor I ween,  
Like public fountains ran his sacks of grain.

Good master, faithful friend, in his estate  
Frugal yet generous, beyond the youth  
He won regard of woman, for in sooth  
The young man may be fair—the old man's great.

Life's primal source, unchangeable and bright,  
The old man entereth, the day eterne ;  
And in the young man's eye a flame may burn,  
But in the old man's eye one seeth light.

As Jacob slept, or Judith, so full deep  
Slept Boaz 'neath the leaves. Now it betided,  
Heaven's gate being partly open, that there glided  
A fair dream forth, and hover'd o'er his sleep.

And in his dream to heaven, the blue and broad,  
Right from his loins an oak tree grew amain.  
His race ran up it far, like a long chain ;  
Below it sung a king, above it died a God.

Whereupon Boaz murmur'd in his heart,  
"The number of my years is past fourscore :  
How may this be ? I have not any more,  
Or son, or wife ; yea, she who had her part

In this my couch, O Lord ! is now in Thine ;  
And she half living, I half dead within,  
Our beings still commingle and are twin,  
It cannot be that I should found a line !

" Youth hath triumphal mornings ; its days bound  
From night, as from a victory. But such  
A trembling as the birch-tree's to the touch  
Of winter is on eld, and evening closes round.

" I bow my soul to death, as kine to meet  
The water bow their fronts athirst." He said.  
The cedar feeleth not the rose's head,  
Nor he the woman's presence at his feet !

For while he slept, the Moabiteess Ruth  
Lay at his feet, expectant of his waking.  
He knowing not what sweet guile she was making ;  
She knowing not what God would have in sooth.

Asphodel scents did Gilgal's breezes bring—  
Through nuptial shadows, questionless, full fast  
The angels sped, for momentarily there pass'd  
A something blue which seem'd to be a wing.

Silent was all in Jezreel and Ur—  
The stars were glittering in the heaven's dusk meadows.  
Far west among those flowers of the shadows,  
The thin clear crescent, lustrous over her,

Made Ruth raise question, looking through the bars  
Of heaven, with eyes half-oped, what God, what comer  
Unto the harvest of the eternal summer,  
Had flung his golden hook down on the field of stars.

The second section, entitled "Decadence de Rome," contains the noble poem of "Androcles and the Lion." Its position in the volume is, in itself, a stroke of art. The corruption of Rome stands out in contrast with the grand and holy shapes of the first era. This piece alone is sufficient to stamp its author as a master. Thus might Tacitus have written had Tacitus been a

poet. The whole essence of Roman history is here distilled into a vial, such as one might conceive to have been poured out by one of the Apocalyptic angels. Lesbia, with the elegant Catallus at her feet, pricking with her sharp golden pin the breast of the Persian slave who arranges her tresses: Delia, walking out with Tibullus, six thousand gory shapes gibbeted upon either side of the road; the infamous Messalina; these—and such as these—are the bloody and lustful figures that are carved out, as it were, upon the darkening sky of Rome, in the sunset of her decline. These are the shapes which occupy the place from which Eve and Ruth have glided far away into the golden summer of the holy past.

I pass over the third section, "Islam," with its wild traditions, and come to the fourth, "The Heroic Christian Cycle." The "Parricide" opens the series; a composition of high and terrible power. Canute has murdered his father, an old man, ripe for the harvest of death, inviting the blow, and hardly conscious of it. The usurper, like many others, adorns by his virtues the crown which he has gained by so enormous a crime. He exhibits himself as a noble and generous prince, a man of genius in the arts of war and peace, an earnest and sincere Christian. Death at last overtakes the gentle tyrant. The Bishop of Aarhus chanted his solemn obsequies. The priests professed that they had seen his beatified spirit with God; but when the tapers were extinguished and the cathedral wrapped in gloom,

a naked, guilty, shivering spirit, spotted with blood, walked forth to seek the expiation which it needed. I venture to produce a translation of the greater portion of this striking poem.

“Night came. The organ that had mourn’d the dead  
Was silent in the sanctuary. The priests,  
Quitting the high cathedral, left the king  
Dead, in sepulchral peace. Then he got up,  
And girded on his sword, and left the tomb,  
(For walls and doors to phantoms are as mist).

He pass’d across the sea, the sea that shows  
The domes of Altona and Elsinore,  
And Aarhus, with their towers, upon its face.  
Night listen’d for the steps of the dark king,  
But he walk’d silent, being himself a dream.  
Straight to Mount Savo, gnaw’d by the tooth of Time,  
Canute went on, and his strange ancestor  
Thus greeted, ‘Let me for a winding-sheet,  
O Mountain Savo, whom the storm torments,  
Cut me a morsel of thy cloak of snow.’  
Him Savo knowing dared not to refuse,  
Whereupon Canute straightway took his sword,  
His sword unbreakable, and from the mount—  
The mount that shook before his warrior-form—  
He cut some snow, and gat himself a shroud.  
He said, ‘Old Mountain ! Death gives little light,  
Where shall I go to look for God ?’ The Mount,  
With its obstructed gorges, and its sides  
Deform’d and black, hid in a flight of clouds,  
Answer’d, ‘I know not, spectre. I am here.’  
He left the icy mountain, and alone,  
With his brow raised and white snow winding-sheet,  
Beyond the isles, and the Norwegian sea,  
Pass’d into the grand silence of the night.  
Behind him the dim world went slowly out.  
He found himself a ghost, a soul, a king  
Without a kingdom, naked, face to face  
With an impalpable immensity.



He pass'd on, saying, 'Tis the tomb : beyond  
Is God.' When he had made three steps, he called.  
But night is silent as the sepulchre,  
And nothing answer'd. Under his white shroud  
Went on Canute. The whiteness of the sheet  
Gave hope to the sepulchral journeyer,  
And he went on, when suddenly he saw  
Upon that strange white veil, like a black star,  
A point that grew, grew slowly, and Canute  
Felt with his spectral hand, and was aware  
That a blood-drop had fallen on his shroud.  
His haughty head, that fear had never bent,  
He raised, and stared right forward at the night.  
But he saw nothing ; space was black—no sound.  
' Forward,' said Canute, raising his proud head.  
There fell a second stain beside the first,  
Then it grew larger, and the Cimbrian chief  
Stared at the thick vague darkness, and saw nought.  
Still as a bloodhound follows on his track,  
Sad he went on. There fell a third red stain  
On the white winding-sheet. He had never fled,  
Howbeit Canute forward went no more,  
But turn'd on that side where the sword arm hangs.  
A drop of blood, as if athwart a dream,  
Fell on the shroud and redden'd his right-hand.  
Then, as in reading one turns back a page,  
A second time he changed his course, and turn'd  
To the dim left. There fell a drop of blood.  
Canute drew back, trembling to be alone,  
And wish'd he had not left his burial couch.  
But when a blood-drop fell again, he stopp'd,  
Stoop'd his pale head, and tried to make a prayer.  
Then fell a drop, and the prayer died away  
In savage terror. Darkly he moved on,  
A hideous spectre hesitating, white,  
And ever as he went, a drop of blood  
Implacably from the darkness broke away  
And stain'd that awful whiteness. He beheld  
Shaking, as doth a poplar in the wind,  
Those stains grow darker and more numerous :

Another, and another, and another.  
They seem'd to light up that funereal gloom,  
And mingling in the folds of the white sheet,  
Made it a cloud of blood. He went, and went,  
And still from that unfathomable vault  
The red blood rained upon him drop by drop,  
Always, for ever—without noise—as though  
From the black feet of some night-gibbeted corpse.  
Alas! who wept those formidable tears?  
The Infinite.—Toward Heaven, of the good  
Attainable, through the wild sea of night,  
That hath nor ebb, nor flow, Canute went on,  
And ever walking came to a closed door,  
That from beneath showed a mysterious light.  
Then he look'd down upon his winding-sheet,  
For that was the great place, the sacred place,  
That was a portion of the light of God,  
And from behind that door Hosannas rang.  
The winding-sheet was red, and Canute stopp'd.  
This is why Canute from the light of day  
Draws ever back, and hath not dared appear  
Before the Judge, whose face is as the sun.  
This is why still remaineth the dark king  
Out in the night, and never having power  
To bring his robe back to its first pure state,  
But feeling at each step a blood-drop fall,  
Wanders eternally 'neath the vast black heaven."

The three or four following poems are in a lighter strain. Roland and Oliver fight two or three days. It is a perfect hurricane of single combat. At last, Oliver, "the dove-eyed eagle," quietly exclaims: "Roland, we shall never end. Were it not better that we became brethren? Harken, I have my sister, the beautiful Aude, with white arms. Espouse her."

"Pardieu! I will it well," cried Roland. "And now let us drink, for the affair was hot."

And thus it was that Roland espoused the lovely Aude!

"Aymerillot" is an account of one of those strange and sudden mutations of fortune, which, in rude ages, so often exalted the adventurous soldier of one day into the peer and captain of the next. The good emperor, Charlemagne, in dolour for Roncevaux, and the fall of his nephew, Roland, and the twelve Peers, wishes to take the strong fort of Narbonne, to wipe away the stain, and to encourage his army. His tried captains shrink before the danger of that dreadful attack. Aymerillot, "*le petit compagnon*," boasts that he can take the fort, amidst the laughter of the soldiers. The vaunt reaches the King's ears. He asks the boaster's name. "Aymery, I am as poor as any poor monk. I am twenty years old; I have neither hay nor straw; I can read Latin, and I am a bachelor. That is all, sire. It pleased fortune to forget me when she was distributing hereditary feoffs:

"Two farthings would cover all wherein I have a part,  
But all the great blue Heaven could never fill my heart.

"I shall enter into Narbonne and be victorious. I shall afterwards punish those who ridicule me, if any remain." And Charles, more radiant than one of the heavenly host, exclaimed: "For this high purpose thou shalt be Aybery of Narbonne, and Count Palatine, and people shall speak of thee civilly. Go, my son!" The next morning Aymery took the town.

“Bivar” brings out at once the unconquerable pride, the filial obedience, and the majestic poverty of the Cid. But “Le Jour des Rois” is a longer and a more characteristic poem. It opens with one of those grotesque pictures which the creator of Quasimodo delights to draw. It is that of a beggar on a Spanish bridge, in the year 860, squatted between two battlements, spectral, shivering in the horror of his monstrous rag—so abject that man and woman, sorrow and joy, burials, nuptials, beasts, sweep by him without touching him. Crested soldier, shaven monk, love, murder, battle,—

“Know not this cinder, mock them at this straw.”

Suddenly fire in every quarter of the horizon! On a given day, the kings swoop down from the mountains, wrap the country in flame, and moisten it with blood. The very daughters of the Cross are not spared.

The return of the soldiers with their spoils is a wonderful picture. One sees them winding away along the mountains, reddened with the setting sun—drunken, bloody, bloated hell-hounds—trailing their spears, while the west burns like blood before them. But how does the poem close? Not with the deep curses of men and the wailings of women, but with fierce and withering contempt from the hideous beggar. The bridge, moistened with blood, is deserted. The mendicant shakes his obscene serge towards the Pyrenees, and cries out in the immensity of night—

"Confront thyself, and own fraternity,  
 O mountain beautiful, O rags ! O filth ! O driven snow !  
 Compare beneath the winds of heaven, which shake them as they blow,  
 Thou thy black clouds, O mountain ! O beggar, thou thy rags !  
 Hide thou thy filth in tatters, and thou thy kings in crags."

The fifth division is headed "Les Chevaliers Errants." The general description of chivalry attains the point where the highest philosophical generalization meets with the highest power of poetical expression. M. Hugo brings out the salient points of chivalry, its mysterious and (so to speak) exceptional agency in a savage age. It is, as Bacon says of revenge, a wild kind of justice. It is, as Victor Hugo calls it, with inimitable fineness, "a magistracy of the sword," "an arm thrust forth out of the darkness, with this cry to the evil-doer, 'Thou shalt perish.'" This thought, at once poetically and historically true, is perfectly carried out in Roland's sudden apparition to deliver the boy-king, and in Evi-radnus overhearing the hideous project of Sigismund and Ladislas.

"Eviradnus," the longest composition in the work, begins with a mysterious whisper of crime, spoken by Sigismund to Ladislas :—

"Qu'est ce que Sigismund et Ladislas ont dit ?"

The description of Eviradnus, the aged knight, is admirable. It shows the author's profound appreciation of the ethical ideal of the knightly mission.

"People sore press'd by kings he doth redress,  
 With a superb, intrepid tenderness."

Where in their horrid scales the princes cast  
Treason, and violence, and fiery blast,  
Iniquity and horror, sin and blood,  
His grand sword was the counterpoise of God.  
Woe to the evil action that shall feel  
The hand of him, the champion clad in steel.  
And death falls from him in the battle stir,  
As water falleth from the glacier."

The old Donjon of Corbus is a perfect castle-piece. M. Hugo's genius appears to be peculiarly at home in mediæval buildings. He seems to have the architecture by heart, and to have watched and listened in such places, till every grim figure carven in stone, every cranny and gargoyle, every clump of ivy, the very lichen on the walls, like rust on a sword, has told him its story. There is a strange custom of Lusace, that the inheritor of its coronet shall sleep a night in the tower. Mahaud, the present Marquise, is a fair young girl :—

"Without the gift of beauty a queen is not a queen.  
What boots to have a kingdom if royalty be not seen ?  
And, as 'twixt rain and darkness, the rainbow laugheth fair,  
And as the young doe plays between the tiger and the bear,  
So, 'twixt Allemagne's dark emperor and Poland's ruthless King  
Is she, the weak and beautiful, the pure and stainless thing !"

And, having spoken of the Emperor and the King, be it known that two musicians—a German and a Pole, Zeno and Joss—have lately arrived, and made themselves specially agreeable to the Marquise; so much so, indeed, that when the time comes for the coronation, and for the custom of Lusace, the minstrels accompany

her to the donjon. Thus the story proceeds, with a description of the hall, where the feast is spread :—

“ But that which makes that ancient hall more ghost-like and more drear,

’Tis not the torches, or the dais, or the tables set with cheer ;  
But in the lines of arches stretching far beyond the lights,  
Those two long rows of horses with their two long rows of knights.  
Each leans against his pillar, and holds his lance in rest,  
The right arm raised in silence, they sit there, breast to breast,  
With harness laced, and vizors down, and cuisses barr’d below,  
And a poniard in a burnish’d sheath at every saddle bow ;  
The gorgets and the breastplates are buckled on with steel ;  
Each horse stands full caparison’d, with housings to the heel.  
With battle-axe and dagger, and broadsword at each side,  
With foot in stirrup, hand on rein, booted and spur’d they ride ;  
’Tis terrible to see them all, with nodding helm and plume,  
For no one stirs and no one speaks in all that awful room.  
Beneath their monstrous housings loom the horses, huge and grim ;  
If Satan kept black cattle, this were a herd for him.  
Such shapes in an uneasy dream across the brain might flit,  
So grave, and cold, and horrible their armèd riders sit.  
All down the misty chamber they grow larger in the shade ;  
The very pillars are a-cold, the darkness looks afraid ;  
Oh, night, what are those livid hosts so fearfully arrayed ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Then history tells her story from these empty armours cold,  
Of those who did her glorious deeds in the great days of old,  
Seems a vision of a chieftain in all those archèd nooks :  
There sit the savage marquises, and there the bloody dukes,  
Who bore upon their pennons, athwart the battle’s din,  
The good saints gilt and painted, upon a fish’s skin.  
There Geth, who led his wild Sclavonians to the field ;  
Mundiac, Ottocar, and Welf, who bore upon his shield  
‘ No fear have I,’ and Ladislas, the first in every list ;  
Great Otho, of the darken’d eyes ; Zultan, and Nazamyst.  
From Spignus down to Spartibor, they pause in long array,  
As if, upon the verge of time, some voice had bade them stay.

\* \* \* \* \*

And through that line of horsemen runs a pathway dark and straight,  
To the dais, where stand the table and the lonely chair of state ;  
The marquises are left hand, the dukes are on the right,  
And till that crumbling roof shall fall, they sit there day and night,  
All face to face, and side to side, alike in all but height ;  
And just outside the double row, his high head backward thrown,  
The sculptors of the olden time had carved a knight of stone.  
He stands before that funeral host to lead them like a king ;  
That host that shall not waken till the last trumpet ring.  
'Tis Charlemagne, who his twelve peers so true and peerless found,  
And made, of all the earth, for them one glorious table round."

Meanwhile, Eviradnus, with his squire, watches by the old castle. The knight bids him observe those three shapes advancing in the moonlight, and thus Mahaud and the two minstrels are most picturesquely described. Eviradnus dismisses his squire and watches undauntedly alone. He goes into the hall where the feast is ready, takes down a suit of armour, seats himself on a saddle, and remains there like a statue. The voice of one of the minstrels sounds a wild song of love in the moonlight. He is handsome, but in that beauty,

"A devil there grimaces evermore,  
Such flowers hath April that the slug crawls o'er."

So Joss, Zeno, and Mahaud sup in the chamber. The Marquise, after some raillery at Zeno's littleness, sinks to sleep, having had a medicated potion given to her by the priest, after the custom of those who slept in that sepulchral place. Then the cloven foot comes out. They dice. Joss wins the kingdom, Zeno the girl, whom he resolves to murder, by flinging her down a trap-door in the chamber, in revenge for her raillery.



But Eviradnus comes down from his saddle. At first he acts the spectre. Afterwards he fairly tells the King and Emperor (for such the minstrels really are) who he is—kills the Pole first, and then knocks the tall German through the trap-door with the little king's corpse. The poem certainly verges upon melodrama too much, but it is of intense interest, and closes thus charmingly :—

"He bears the lady back again to the fatal ducal chair,  
Shuts down the spring of iron, and shuts out the dungeon air.  
He sets all things in order, and mutters soft and low,  
'It hath not cost one drop of blood ; 'tis well it should be so.'  
But suddenly the tocsin sounds for morning far away,  
And a long thread of scarlet lies on the mountains gray.  
Dawn breaks : the hamlets are astir, and bearing branches green,  
A joyous people throng to greet their lady and their queen.  
Upwoke the rosy dawn—upwakes with it Mahaud,  
Looks round, and deems the glamour of the place has changed  
things so,  
That for her two fair minstrels she meets an old man's glance,  
And there's a shade in those sweet eyes, regretting them perchance ;  
But courteously drew near to her that prince of honour bright,  
'Madam ' said Eviradnus—' How did you sleep last night ? ' "

The "Thrones of the East," is the title of the sixth epoch. It is introduced by "Sultan Mourad." This monster's character is of the most hideous and infernal complexion. Once only has he ever performed an act of kindness. He saw a hog, wounded by the butcher's knife, lying in the heat, the sunshine piercing its gaping wounds, like arrows of fire. He pushed it under the shadow of a gateway. That night his soul was required. A dreadful catalogue of his crimes is

spread before Eternal Justice, and the angel calls for sentence upon the guilty soul. But suddenly, in the midst of all the terrors and glories of the infinite spaces, the unclean beast stands forth, and Mourad is pardoned.

"Pork," says Mr. Pumblechook, "is a subject from which much moral gratification may be extracted." He could scarcely have expected this !

The Pantheistic raptures of "Le Satyre," representing the Renaissance, are beyond my criticism, because they are beyond my comprehension. "Ratbert," in the eighth cycle, headed Italy, is, I believe, considered in France the gem of the second volume. And truly that picture of the child Isora, and of her knightly grand-sire, in their castle, evening by evening coming forth from the chapel, under corridors and pillars, peopled with angels mingled with knights, of whom the warriors seem to salute the old man, and the spirits to greet the child, is beautiful exceedingly. Pitiful, too, most pitiful, all darkened with shadows of death, that other picture where the brave and unsuspecting soldier looks with love and pride upon the *toilette* of his little darling, preparing to welcome the Emperor who murders her, and holds hideous revel in the castle hall, which has been decked to receive him. But the horror is quite too atrocious for an English taste.

But "La Rose de l'Infante," is perhaps the most admirable thing in these volumes. The character of Philip is drawn in a few powerful lines ; his slow and cautious nature, veiling its hatred so long, and at last

sending forth the great Armada, is embodied rather than described. The conception which links and yet contrasts the father and the child; the strokes which bring out the Infanta's beauty and haughtiness; above all, the poetic art which unites the child's rose with the father's fleet, and the moral which links the leaves scattered on the pond with the ships driven by the storm, are nothing short of marvellous. The piece is not like one of those cathedral windows, its panes cramped together with heavy lines of lead, to which M. Emile Montégut compares Victor Hugo's poetic workmanship: it is cast at a single jet, without speck or flaw. I have attempted to render a considerable portion of it into verse; but I am sensible how much my English heroics want the vigour of the splendid original.

"She is so little—in her hand a rose :  
A stern duenna watches where she goes,  
What sees she ? Ah, she knows not—the clear shine  
Of waters shadow'd by the birch and pine.  
What lies before ? A swan with silver wing,  
The wave that murmurs to the branch's swing,  
Or the deep garden flowering below ?  
Fair as an angel frozen into snow,  
The royal child looks on, and hardly seems to know.

As in a depth of glory far away,  
Down the green park, a lofty palace lay,  
There, drank the deer from many a crystal pond,  
And the starr'd peacock gemm'd the shade beyond.  
Around that child all nature shone more bright ;  
Her innocence was as an added light.  
Rubies and diamonds strew'd the grass she trode,  
And jets of sapphire from the dolphins flow'd.

Still at the water's side she holds her place,  
Her bodice bright is set with Genoa lace ;  
O'er her rich robe, through every satin fold,  
Wanders an arabesque in threads of gold.  
From its green urn the rose unfolding grand,  
Weighs down the exquisite smallness of her hand.  
And when the child bends to the red leaf's tip,  
Her laughing nostril, and her carmine lip,  
The royal flower purpureal, kissing there,  
Hides more than half that young face bright and fair,  
So that the eye deceived can scarcely speak  
Where shows the rose, or where the rose-red cheek.  
Her eyes look bluer from their dark-brown frame :  
Sweet eyes, sweet form, and Mary's sweeter name.  
All joy, enchantment, perfume, waits she there,  
Heaven in her glance, her very name a prayer.

Yet 'neath the sky, and before life and fate,  
Poor child she feels herself so vaguely great.  
With stately grace she gives her presence high  
To dawn, to spring, to shadows fitting by,  
To the dark sunset glories of the Heaven,  
And all the wild magnificence of even ;  
On nature waits, eternal and serene,  
With all the graveness of a little queen.  
She never sees a man but on his knee,  
She Duchess of Brabant one day will be,  
Or rule Sardinia, or the Flemish crowd :  
She is the Infanta, five years old, and proud.

Thus is it with king's children, for they wear  
A shadowy circlet on their forehead fair ;  
Their tottering steps are towards a kingly chair.  
Calmly she waits, and breathes her gathered flower  
Till one shall cull for her imperial power.  
Already her eye saith, ' It is my right ; '  
Even love flows from her, mingled with affright.  
If some one seeing her, so fragile stand,  
Were it to save her, should put forth his hand,

Ere he had made a step, or breath'd a vow,  
The scaffold's shadow were upon his brow.

While the child laughs, beyond the bastion thick  
Of that vast palace, Roman Catholic,  
Whose every turret, like a mitre shows,  
Behind the lattice something fearful goes.  
Men shake to see a shadow from beneath  
Passing from pane to pane, like vapoury wreath,  
Pale, black, and still it glides from room to room,  
Or stands a whole day, motionless in its gloom,  
In the same spot, like ghost upon a tomb ;  
Or glues its dark brow to the casement wan,  
Dim shade that lengthens as the night draws on.  
Its step funereal lingers like the swing  
Of passing bell—'tis death, or else the king.

'Tis he, the man, by whom men live and die ;  
But could one look beyond that phantom eye,  
As by the wall he leans a little space,  
And see what shadows fill his soul's dark place,  
Not the fair child, the waters clear, the flowers  
Golden with sunset—not the birds, the bowers—  
No ; 'neath that eye, those fatal brows that keep  
The fathomless brain, like ocean, dark and deep,  
There, as in moving mirage, should one find  
A fleet of ships that go before the wind :  
On the foam'd wave, and 'neath the starlight pale,  
The strain and rattle of a fleet in sail,  
And through the fog an isle on her white rock  
Harkening from far the thunder's coming shock.

Still by the water's edge doth silent stand  
The Infanta, with the rose flower in her hand,  
Careses it with eyes as blue as heaven ;  
Sudden a breeze, such breeze as panting even  
From her full heart flings out to field and brake,  
Ruffles the waters, bids the rushes shake,  
And makes through all their green recesses swell  
The massive myrtle and the asphodel.

To the fair child it comes, and tears away  
 On its strong wind the rose flower from the spray,  
 On the wild waters casts it bruised and torn,  
 And the Infanta only holds a thorn.  
 Frighten'd, perplex'd, she follows with her eyes  
 Into the basin where her ruin lies,  
 Looks up to heaven, and questions of the breeze  
 That had not fear'd her highness to displease ;  
 But all the pond is changed, anon so clear,  
 Now black it swells, as though with rage and fear ;  
 A mimic sea its small waves rise and fall,  
 And the poor rose is broken by them all.  
 Its hundred leaves toss'd wildly round and round  
 Beneath a thousand waves are whelm'd and drown'd ;  
 It was a foundering fleet you might have said ;  
 And the duenna with her face of shade,—  
 "Madam," for she had mark'd her ruffled mind,  
 "All things belong to princes—but the wind."

Another piece which I cannot resist the pleasure of citing, is "Les Pauvres Gens." I heartily wish that M. Hugo had been tempted to give us more in this gentle and wholesome vein.

#### THE POOR.

"Tis night—within the close-shut cabin door,  
 The room is wrapp'd in shade save where there fall  
 Some twilight rays that creep along the floor,  
 And show the fisher's nets upon the wall.

In the dim corner, from the oaken chest  
 A few white dishes glimmer ; through the shade  
 Stands a tall bed with dusky curtains dress'd,  
 And a rough mattress at its side is laid.

Five children on the long low mattress lie—  
 A nest of little souls, it heaves with dreams ;

In the high chimney the last embers die,  
And redden the dark roof with crimson gleams.

The mother kneels and thinks, and pale with fear,  
She prays alone, hearing the billows shout :  
While to wild winds, to rocks, to midnight drear,  
The ominous old ocean sobs without.

Poor wives of fishers ! Ah 'tis sad to say,  
Our sons, our husbands, all that we love best,  
Our hearts, our souls, are on those waves away,  
Those ravening wolves that know nor ruth, nor rest.

Think how they sport with those beloved forms ;  
And how the clarion-blowing wind unties  
Above their heads the tresses of the storms :  
Perchance even now the child, the husband dies.

For we can never tell where they may be  
Who, to make head against the tide and gale,  
Between them and the starless, soundless sea  
Have but one bit of plank, with one poor sail.

Terrible fear ! We seek the pebbly shore,  
Cry to the rising billows, ' Bring them home.'  
Alas ! what answer gives that troubled roar,  
To the dark thought that haunts us as we roam.

Janet is sad : her husband is alone,  
Wrapp'd in the black shroud of this bitter night :  
His children are so little, there is none  
To give him aid. ' Were they but old they might.'  
Ah, mother, when they too are on the main,  
How wilt thou weep : ' Would they were young again.'

She takes her lantern—'tis his hour at last :  
She will go forth, and see if the day breaks,  
And if his signal-fire be at the mast ;  
Ah, no—not yet—no breath of morning wakes.

No line of light o'er the dark waters lies ;  
It rains, it rains, how black is rain at morn :  
The day comes trembling, and the young dawn cries—  
Cries like a baby fearing to be born.

Sudden her human eyes that peer and watch  
Through the deep shade, a mouldering dwelling find,  
No light within—the thin door shakes—the thatch  
O'er the green walls is twisted of the wind,

Yellow, and dirty, as a swollen rill.  
' Ah, me,' she saith, ' here doth that widow dwell ;  
Few days ago my good man left her ill :  
I will go in and see if all be well.'

She strikes the door, she listens, none replies,  
And Janet shudders. ' Husbandless, alone,  
And with two children—they have scant supplies.  
Good neighbour ! She sleeps heavy as a stone.'

She calls again, she knocks, 'tis silence still ;  
No sound, no answer—suddenly the door,  
As if the senseless creature felt some thrill  
Of pity, turn'd—and open lay before.

She enter'd, and her lantern lighted all  
The house so still, but for the rude waves' din.  
Through the thin roof the plashing rain-drops fall  
But something terrible is couched within.

Half-clothed, dark-featured, motionless lay she,  
The once strong mother, now devoid of life ;  
Dishevelled spectre of dead misery,  
All that the poor leaves after his long strife.

The cold and livid arm already stiff,  
Hung o'er the soak'd straw of her wretched bed  
The mouth lay open horribly, as if  
The parting soul with a great cry had fled—



That cry of death which startles the dim ear  
Of vast eternity. And all the while  
Two little children, in one cradle near,  
Slept face to face, on each sweet face a smile.

The dying mother o'er them, as they lay,  
Had cast her gown, and wrapp'd her mantle's fold,  
Feeling chill death creep up, she will'd that they  
Should yet be warm while she was lying cold.

Rock'd by their own weight, sweetly sleep the twain,  
With even breath, and foreheads calm and clear ;  
So sound that the last trump might call in vain,  
For being innocent they have no fear.

Still howls the wind, and ever a drop slides  
Through the old rafters, where the thatch is weak,  
On the dead woman's face it falls, and glides  
Like living tears along her hollow cheek.

And the dull wave sounds ever like a bell,  
The dead lies still, and listens to the strain ;  
For when the radiant spirit leaves its shell,  
The poor corpse seems to call it back again.

It seeks the soul through the air's dim expanse,  
And the pale lip saith to the sunken eye,  
'Where is the beauty of thy kindling glance ?  
And where thy balmy breath ?' It makes reply :

'Alas ! live, love, find primroses in spring,  
Fate hath one end for festival and tear ;  
Bid your hearts vibrate, let your glasses ring ;  
But as dark ocean drinks each streamlet clear,

'So, for the kisses that delight the flesh,  
For mother's worship, and for children's bloom,  
For song, for smile, for love so fair and fresh,  
For laugh, for dance, there is one goal—the tomb.'

And why does Janet pass so fast away ?  
 What hath she done within that house of dread ?  
 What foldeth she beneath her mantle grey ?  
 And hurries home, and hides it in her bed :  
 With half-averted face, and nervous tread,  
 What hath she stolen from the awful dead ?

The dawn was whitening over the sea's verge  
 As she sat pensive, touching broken chords  
 Of half-remorseful thought, while the hoarse surge  
 Howl'd a sad concert to her broken words.

'Ah, my poor husband ! we had five before,  
 Already so much care, so much to find,  
 For he must work for all. I give him more.  
 What was that noise ? His step ! Ah no, the wind.

'That I should be afraid of him I love !  
 I have done ill. If he should beat me now,  
 I would not blame him. Did not the door move ?  
 Not yet, poor man.' She sits with careful brow  
 Wrapp'd in her inward grief ; nor hears the roar  
 Of winds and waves that dash against his prow,  
 Nor the black cormorant shrieking on the shore.

Sudden the door flies open wide, and lets  
 Noisily in the dawn-light scarcely clear,  
 And the good fisher dragging his damp nets,  
 Stands on the threshold, with a joyous cheer.

'Tis thou !' she cries, and eager as a lover,  
 Leaps up and holds her husband to her breast ;  
 Her greeting kisses all his vesture cover ;  
 'Tis I, good wife !' and his broad face express'd

How gay his heart that Janet's love made light ;  
 'What weather was it ?' 'Hard.' 'Your fishing ?' 'Bad.  
 The sea was like a nest of thieves to-night ;  
 But I embrace thee, and my heart is glad.

'There was a devil in the wind that blew,  
I tore my net, caught nothing, broke my line,  
And once I thought the bark was broken too ;  
What did you all the night long, Janet mine ?'

She, trembling in the darkness, answered, 'I ?  
O nought,—I sew'd, I watch'd, I was afraid,—  
The waves were loud as thunders from the sky,  
But it is over.' Shyly then, she said—

'Our neighbour died last night, it must have been  
When you were gone. She left two little ones,  
So small, so frail, William and Madeline ;  
The one just lisps, the other scarcely runs.'

The man look'd grave, and in the corner cast  
His old fur bonnet, wet with rain and sea,  
Mutter'd awhile, and scratch'd his head,—at last,  
'We have five children, this makes seven,' said he.

'Already in bad weather we must sleep  
Sometimes without our supper. Now. Ah well—  
'Tis not my fault. These accidents are deep ;  
It was the good God's will. I cannot tell.

'Why did He take the mother from those scraps,  
No bigger than my fist ? 'Tis hard to read ;  
A learned man might understand perhaps—  
So little, they can neither work nor need.

'Go fetch them, wife, they will be frightened sore,  
If with the dead alone they waken thus,—  
That was the mother knocking at our door,  
And we must take the children home to us.

'Brother and sister shall they be to ours,  
And they will learn to climb my knee at even ;  
When He shall see these strangers in our bowers,  
More fish, more food, will give the God of Heaven.

‘I will work harder ; I will drink no wine—  
Go fetch them. Wherefore dost thou linger, dear ?  
Not thus were wont to move those feet of thine.’  
She drew the curtain, saying, ‘They are here.’ ”

“Le Régiment du Baron Madruce” contains some superb invectives against those Swiss mercenaries who sold themselves to do the work of tyrants. The pictures of Alpine scenery interwoven with the declamation are very noble:—

“When the regiment of the Halberdiers is proudly marching by,  
The eagle of the mountains screams from out his stormy sky ;  
Who speaketh to the precipice, and to the chasm sheer ;  
Who hovers o’er the thrones of kings, and bids the caitiffs fear.  
King of the peak and glacier ; king of the cold, white scalps—  
He lifts his head, at that close tread, the eagle of the Alps.  
O, shame ! those men that march below. O, ignominy dire ;  
Are the sons of my free mountains sold for imperial hire.  
Ah, the vilest in the dungeon !—ah, the slave upon the seas—  
Is great, is pure, is glorious, is grand compared with these,  
Who, born amid my holy rocks, in solemn places high,  
Where the tall pines bend like rushes when the storm goes sweeping  
by ;

Yet give the strength of foot they learn’d by perilous path and flood,  
And from their blue-eyed mothers won, the old, mysterious blood ;  
The daring that the good south wind into their nostrils blew,  
And the proud swelling of the heart with each pure breath they drew ;  
The graces of the mountain glens, with flowers in summer gay ;  
And all the glory of the hills, to earn a lackey’s pay.  
Their country free and joyous—she of the rugged sides—  
She of the rough peaks arrogant, whereon the tempest rides :  
Mother of the unconquer’d thought and of the savage form,  
Who brings out of her sturdy heart the hero and the storm ;  
Who giveth freedom unto man and life unto the beast ;  
Who hears her silver torrents ring like joy-bells at a feast ;  
Who hath her caves for palaces, and where her chalets stand—  
The proud, old archer of Altorf, with his good bow in his hand.

Is she to suckle jailers ? shall shame and glory rest,  
 Amid her lakes and mountains, like twins upon her breast ?  
 Shall the two-headed eagle, marked with her double blow,  
 Drink of her milk through all those hearts whose blood he bids to  
 flow ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Say was it pomp ye needed, and all the proud array  
 Of courtliness and high parade upon a gala day ?  
 Look up ; have not my valleys their torrents white with foam—  
 Their lines of silver bullion on the blue hills of home ?  
 Doth not sweet May embroider my rocks with pearls and flowers ?  
 Her fingers trace a richer lace than yours in all my bowers.  
 Are not my old peaks gilded when the sun rises proud,  
 And each one shakes a white mist plume out of the thunder-cloud ?  
 O, neighbours of the golden sky—sons of the mountain sod—  
 Why wear a base king's colours for the livery of God ?  
 O, shame ! despair ! to see my Alps their giant shadows fling  
 Into the very waiting-room of tyrant and of king !  
 O, thou deep heaven, unsullied yet, into thy gulfs sublime—  
 Up azure tracts of flaming light—let my free pinion climb ;  
 Till from my sight, in that clear light, earth and her crimes be gone—  
 The men who act the evil deeds—the caitiffs who look on.  
 Far, far into that space immense, beyond the vast white veil,  
 Where distant stars come out and shine, and the great sun grows pale.”

This Legend of History closes with a glimpse into the future. The “Twentieth Century” is its fourteenth section. It is taken up with “Pleine Mer,” and “Pleine Ciel.” Then comes an extravaganza, “Hors des Temps, La Trompette du Jugement.” The nations, after all their battles and turmoil, at last find repose. How do you suppose ? Why, by being emancipated from the law of gravitation !

“Défaite brusquement par l'invisible main,  
*La pesanteur, liée au pied du genre humain,*  
 Se brisa, cette chain était toutes les chaînes !

Tout s'envola dans l'homme les fureurs, les haines,  
L'ignorance et l'erreur, la misère et la faim,  
Le droit divin des rois, les faux dieux Juifs ou guébres."

And again,

"Hors de la pesanteur, c'est l'avenir fondé."

Taking advantage, I suspect, of Madame de Stael's fine saying, that "there is a point at which the genius of Newton and that of Homer meet," the poet observes of this ballooning of the twentieth century in its intellectual results,

"On voit s'envoler le calcul de Newton,  
Monté sur l'ode de Pindare."

As to its spiritual effect—

"Il mêle presque à Dieu l'âme du genre humain."

II. A poetical work may be judged from various points of view. We may consider the "Légende des Siècles" with reference to the order of poetic genius concerned in its production—with reference to the action and manners, as the old critics used to say—and with reference to its versification.

1. Poetry was, in other times, classified according to the mould in which it was cast, and the external shape which it assumed—epic, dramatic, lyric, didactic, idyllic, or satirical.\* The more reflective turn of modern thought and the progress of mental analysis have introduced a new principle of division. The powers

\* Bacon divides poetry into narrative, dramatic, and parabolic.—*De Augm. Scient.* ii. 13.

of mind predominant in the composition of different poems form the basis of classification. The division of the faculties concerned in poetry into *fancy* and *imagination*, affords a satisfactory test for assigning the rank which a poet is entitled to hold.\*

Imagination is the faculty which gives elevation and unity. When it deals with individual images or objects, it confers upon them higher properties, or detects the universal laws of which they are instances or illustrations. When it acts upon objects in conjunction, it draws them to one luminous point. Fancy is definite; it has a quaint, tiny, delicate, yet definite measure, "no bigger than an agate stone." Imagination deals with the vast and indefinite—"his stature reached the sky." Fancy is subtle, surprising, playful, occasionally though rarely pathetic. Imagination is serious and sublime. Fancy is rapid and profuse: it trusts that the number and felicity of the images which it scatters, may atone for their want of individual value: it prides itself at times upon a curious and loving subtlety, which copies the minutest tracery of some object which it wishes to employ as an analogical illustration. The special work of imagination is to make finite objects *images* of the infinite and invisible. A poet, possessed of all the necessary technical accomplishments, in whose genius imagination preponderates, is a great poet. A poet, in whom fancy prevails, may be a splendid rhetorician,

\* See Note I. at the end of the lecture.

or a beautiful versifier, but he is deficient in the serious and elevating power, which constitutes poetical greatness.

Now M. Victor Hugo possesses fancy rather than imagination. Thus of the steamer in "Pleine Mer," he writes,

"Du dôme de Saint Paul son mât passait le faite."

How poor is this compared with Milton's description of the wand of Satan! Milton's comparison tends to the infinite: Hugo's is simply an exaggeration of the Kentucky stamp. With the exaggerating, he also frequently exhibits the diminishing effects of mere fancy. I will not be hard enough to object to

"Arcturus, oiseau d'or, scintille dans son nid,"

"Arcturus, golden bird, who flickers in his nest;"

nor even to

"Ces fleurs de l'ombre"

of the stars in the poem upon Ruth. But what shall we say to

"La lueur lactée

La fourmière des abîmes!"

The "Consecration of Woman," the first poem in the work, is a signal instance of this predominance of fancy. Nothing is grand and serious, all is glaring and coloured. The very fogs and shadows are illuminated. Avalanches of gold melt into the blue of heaven. The flowers cannot rustle among their leaves



in unobtrusive loveliness : they are isolated, and stand out from the landscape, like blotches of light—

“The young world knew no wrinkle in that hour,  
Call not the lily pale, ’twas light in flower.”

The figure of the mother of all living is unworthy of this great genius. Eve is simply a voluptuous blonde. The angels who float round her are not the spiritual creatures of Milton. They are but larger editions of those who,

“Save the powder from too rude a gale,  
Nor let th’ imprison’d essences exhale ;  
Nay, who in dreams, invention may bestow,  
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.”

They are copied from the saloon of a steamer or of a *restaurant*, rather than from the Old Testament. Eve herself is overshadowed by palms, smothered in pinks, in blue lotuses, in roses with half-closed lips. She is rather a flower in flesh and blood than anything else—

“As if, of all those soul-like blossoms grand,  
The fairest into woman might expand !”

My conclusion then is that M. Victor Hugo does not possess that imagination which is characteristic of the greatest poets, and of them only.

2. Tested by its action, and by the manners delineated in it, the poetry of “*La Légende*” leads us to a similar result.

M. Hugo has a rich pictorial fancy. Is he equally

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opulent upon the ethical side of his work? I think not. His descriptions are wonderfully varied, and wonderfully fine: his delineations of moral phenomena are narrow and monotonous. He can delineate conscience in a majestic and supernatural repose, as in Eviradnus; he can represent it in commotion as in Cain and Canute; he can throw himself into psychological *rapport* with enormous guilt, and with incredible virtue. His view of humanity is taken from its two extremes—every figure is sublimed to a demi-god, or degraded to a demon. There are men fiercely brutal, like the ten kings, and Mourad, like Sigismund, and Ladislas. There are men driven by wild remorse, like Cain and Canute; though even here his extraordinary fancy exaggerates spiritual phenomena into phantasmagoric terrors. There are men perfectly brave and pure, like Eviradnus and Roland. This monotony of violent contrasts wearies and disappoints.

As the landscape of history is unrolled by M. Hugo, the spectator is more than wearied or disappointed. You show me, he says to the illustrious poet, a fearful nightmare, a startling melodrama, rather than the genuine legend of the progress of humanity. I am sick with blood, and stupefied with horror. I want something more wholesome than this sombre repetition of meanness and brutality. If we must have sensation novels, let sensation poetry be far from us. Let not the episodes of Thersites and Cacus fill up the epic of history. The true and only root of great his-

torical poetry is, that it be in some sense *heroic*,\* and founded upon a sense of the dignity of human nature. Events, such as they are, possess neither amplitude nor interest, nor, in the view which we ordinarily take, justice sufficient to gratify the cravings of the heart.† There is a something in our nature which yearns after the delight of such creations, of which it is no exaggeration to say that it is the historian of some glorious past, and the prophet of some glorious future. This is the immortal fountain of poetry within us. The narrative poetry which does not give satisfaction to these cravings, does not stand among the highest of its kind. It is below a great poet to measure his power by the mere intensity of the effect which he can

\* I may be allowed to quote Cowley's magnificent, but half-forgotten lines :—

“ When the wisest poets seek  
In all their liveliest colours to set forth  
A picture of heroic worth,  
(The pious Trojan or the prudent Greek),  
They choose some comely prince of heavenly birth,—  
They feed him not with nectar and the meat  
That cannot without joy be eat ;  
But in the cold of want and storm of alien chance,  
They harden his young virtue by degrees.  
The beauteous drop first into ice doth freeze,  
And into solid crystal next advance.”

† Bacon, *De Augm. Scient.* ii. 13.—*Illud hujusce rei caput est, mentem nostram esse naturâ suâ infinitam ; quamobrem etiam e falsis capere voluptatem, quia exsuperant vulgares limites veritatis. Poesis tanto quàm artes illæ excellentius, quòd cæteræ res ipsas, uti sunt, representant \* \* \* \* \* at Poeta et naturam alteram et fortunas plures. Videtur sanè res ipsas, non, ut alii, quasi Histrio, narrare, sed velut alter Deus condere ; unde nomen.*—JUL. C. SCALIGER, *De Subtil.* cccvii. 11. *Poetices*, i. 1.

produce. In the work of a great poet I am entitled to look for delight and elevation. As I read this poem, I confess your power; but as I survey it upon the whole, and with that sense of intellectual remoteness which is given by considering its general effect, the sum of my impressions is not delight. In spite of exquisite passages and wonderful lines, it is something approaching to disgust. You delineate a few exceptional figures of virtuous and superior men; for the rest, humanity may be divided into two portions—a few drivers, called kings, with strong lashes, and myriads of slaves. Is the progress of man nothing better than this? You exhibit him at last emancipated from the law of gravitation, and living somewhere near the stars in enormous balloons;—I have no great faith in him after all, if he is the *genus homo* of M. Victor Hugo. Fool and knave do not change their natures because they are lifted up higher than Mont Blanc. In short, your humanity is not humanity: your progress is not progress; and your legend is very like a lie.

In this dark draft of humanity, tyranny is the darkest shape. The ex-Legitimist could speak kindly of kings and emperors. The death of Charles X. was touchingly commemorated by Victor Hugo. The removal of Napoleon's ashes to Paris has been celebrated by him in some grand and sonorous lines; but at present, Shelley's vague rhetoric against kings and priests is weak and vacillating, compared with M.

Hugo's inexorable hatred. Picture upon picture appals ; declamation upon declamation peals in our ears. There is Canute the parricide—sweeping like a shadow through the night, unable to assoil his head with a shroud of the driven snow. There are the kings swooping down upon a quiet country and its innocent inhabitants. The ten princes are ready to imbrue their hands in their nephew's blood. The selfishness, cruelty, and unbelief of kings are so many axioms taken for granted, and acted upon by themselves. But it is in Epiradnus that the poet's wrath glows with the whitest heat. Who that has read will ever forget that fearful burst of invective !

“ Under this haughtiness that none can enter,  
This arch triumphant with the limitless centre :  
Under this royalty, veil'd from the rude world ;  
Under these crowns begemm'd, bestarr'd, empearl'd ;  
Under high exploit, prompt and bloody plan,  
One is a monster, one a beggar-man.”

If M. Hugo wishes to make his work correspond with its titles and with its pretensions, he must search for kings of a different stamp : he must turn from the blood-stained annals of provincial history, from names that are remembered only to be execrated, to other pages and names that sparkle on the forehead of history. Alfred, Charlemagne, and St. Louis have surely a better right to a place in the “ Legend of the Ages ” than any of the monarchs who are mentioned in these two volumes.

There is another observation which I must make. The character of the Perfect Man just appears in "Christ and Lazarus;" but it is introduced with a frigid indifference, which contrasts strangely with the rest of the volume. It reminds one of Gibbon's tone in comparing Christianity with Paganism. It is not that facts are misstated; but the sunset of Paganism is emblazoned with the richest tints of that opulent pencil: the sunshine of Christianity is leaden and colourless. So is it with M. Hugo. No beauty streams from an opened heaven upon the Divine Man: no noble blossoms spring before His path: no massive lines carve out His moral features in marble and colossal grandeur: no tender touches move us to tears. He who can burst into ecstasy at the pardon of the monster Mourad by the pleading of a hog, has no lyrical delight for the most exquisite tenderness and self-devotion. It must be a broken profile, a mutilated likeness of humanity, where humanity's finest development is, at least, unappreciated.

I may not have given sufficient credit to M. Hugo for such poems as "Boaz Endormi" and "Les Pauvres Gens." I should, perhaps, have remembered his own assertion, that when his whole work shall have been written, apparent errors of perspective will be seen to adjust themselves. The pictures of Rubens before which we stand in silent admiration, as they are suspended from the vast walls of Antwerp Cathedral, were severely criticised when they were hung in a confined

space. It is not to be forgotten, as the illustrious exile sadly and pointedly remarks, that if *riant* pictures are rare in the "Légende des Siècles," they are also rare in history. That M. Hugo possesses power which the present work has scarcely called into exercise, every lover of French literature must be aware; but judging this production as a whole by itself, I believe that it is clearly liable to the objections which I have stated.

3. M. Hugo's versification is much admired by the most competent critics of his country. There are many lyrical pieces in the "Légende" whose rhythm has been praised by so exquisite a judge as M. Emile Montégut. The great bulk of the two volumes, however, is in the classical French Alexandrine. That measure possesses a certain full-blown stateliness of its own. It is well adapted for poetical narrative, and for sounding sentiment; and in the hand of a master, like Victor Hugo, it yields to no measure in any modern language for those Miltonic enumerations of names which are so charming to educated ears. But for the expression of subtle shades of thought, it is peculiarly intractable, and in a long poem I am reminded of Byron's line,

"The whetstone of the teeth, monotony in wine."\*

III. It is now more than time for me to close the task with which I have so long exercised your patience. Some of the poems which I have not attempted to

\* See Note II. at the end of the lecture.

translate might tax an ingenuity beyond mine. But such as the translations are, they may show that I have tried at least to enter into the spirit of Victor Hugo's poetry. I admire his learning, his sinewy rhetoric, his sounding declamation, his pictorial richness. It is easy to cite passages like Shelley, in their coloured fluidity and fierce pathetic indignation; like Macaulay, in their swinging rhyme; like Tennyson, in their compressed pictures and pregnant sentiment; like Dryden, in their sonorous strength. But I am persuaded that his work falls short of being a great work, in all that is most essential to poetical greatness—in its want of imagination, as distinguished from fancy; in the monotony of its manners, and the unpoetical nature of its action. How is this? When we consider M. Hugo's great endowments, the answer is instructive. The various faculties of our nature are not isolated, they are intimately connected. We imbibe false principles at the peril of our whole being. He who has lost the central points from which alone humanity can be contemplated—the Fall and the Redemption—can never write the Legend of the Ages. He in whom a blind hatred for particular classes of men and particular great political institutions has become a passion, can never be the poet of the history of humanity, for the muse of that history is love, and not hatred. A man must be partaker of Shakespeare's all-embracing toleration, before he can ascend to Shakespeare's altitude. We can scarcely tell how much of the calm depth and tranquil fervour of



our poetical literature, of its wholesome common sense, of its "medicinal power," may be owing to the unrecognised influence of those happy institutions from whose vantage ground we can view the past with an almost passionless impartiality. True tolerance, wisdom, and judgment, are the requisites for every great work, and therefore for every great poem. The failure of men of the first order in producing works of the first order is thus a lesson in the highest morality, as well as in the highest criticism :

Scribendi rectè sapere est et principium et fons.

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#### NOTE I.

IN the history of language, there are some few instances in which refinements of distinction perish. Thus, *country*, in the sense which includes a relation to a body politic, a civil constitution, and peculiar obligations, is, by Cowley at least, invariably written *countray* ; while in the less complex meaning, opposed to the town, it appears in its modern spelling. But the tendency of language is to grow more and more subtle, to edge off its words more sharply, to desynonymize.

A remarkable illustration is supplied in the words *imagination* and *fancy*. These terms were at one period employed almost indiscriminately by the most accurate masters of language.

Burgersdyk may stand for the older school of logical

metaphysicians, just about to disappear before the advance of Leibnitz and Locke. According to him, the office of *fancy* is to *imagine*, or, in Aristotelian phrase, to form *phantasies*, *i. e.*, images and likenesses, *representative* of things which have been perceived by the external senses. These images of fancy represent either single objects which have been previously presented, as gold, mountain, horse, man; or two or more objects compounded, as golden mountain, centaur. In Hobbes, imagination and fancy begin to part company, and split asunder. The philosopher of Malmesbury repeats the current doctrine of imagination with much affectation of originality; and originality there is, not in the doctrine itself, which is simply that just stated, but in the exquisite illustrations which accompany it. But in his letter to Sir William Davenant, he discriminates fancy as emphatically the faculty which produces the ornaments of a poem, as the poetic element in human nature generally.\* I shall easily obtain pardon for quoting this admirable passage:—

“Judgment begets the strength and structure, and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem. Memory is the world (though not really, yet so as in a looking-glass) in which the judgment, the severer sister, busieth herself in a grave and rigid examination, whereby the fancy, when any work of art is to be performed, finds her materials at hand and prepared for use; so that

\* So Bacon. “*Pösis ad phantasiam refertur.*”—DE AUGM. *Scient.* ii. 1.

when she seems to fly from one Indies to the other, and from heaven to earth, and to penetrate into the future, and into herself, and all this in a point of time, the voyage is not very great, herself being all the search; and her wonderful celerity consisteth not so much in motion, as in copious imagery discreetly ordered and perfectly registered in the memory. So far forth as the fancy of man has traced the ways of true philosophy, so far it hath produced marvellous effects to the benefit of mankind. All that is beautiful or defensible in building, or marvellous in engines and instruments of motion; whatsoever commodity men receive from the observation of the heavens, from the description of the earth, from the account of time, from walking on the sea, and whatsoever distinguisheth the civility of Europe from the barbarity of the American savages, is the workmanship of fancy, but guided by the precepts of true philosophy."

But imagination was in process of time to lose the dominion which had been conceded to her even by the scholastic philosophy. The superior liveliness of perception by sight is painted on the very face of the Greek language. Of verbs signifying sensation, those which denote this sense govern an accusative; those which denote others, a genitive; as if the sight acted upon its objects, while the other senses were rather patients of them.\* This may explain to us the curtail-

\* I have borrowed this observation from Scaliger. Dr. Donaldson explains differently the genitive following verbs which refer to

ment of the domain of imagination in some writers. Thus, Reid says that "imagination, in its proper sense, signifies a lively conception of objects of sight." And Addison remarks—"It is the sense of sight which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of imagination I mean such as arise from visible objects. We cannot have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight."

Meanwhile, imagination had come to be employed as a term of contempt. Bishop Butler, in the *Analogy*, uses it to express the mistake of poetic resemblance for logical analogy. With that grave writer, it is "that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere—of some assistance, indeed, to apprehension, but the author of all error;"—"the delusive custom of substituting imagination in the room of experience." Butler's philosophic editor, Bishop Fitzgerald, seems to inherit his master's contemptuous usage of imagination. In his index to the *Analogy*, under imagination, we find this notice:—"Men of warm *imagination*, apt to fancy coincidences." And the place referred to is this:—"Such as are *fanciful* in any one certain way, will make out a thousand coincidences which seem to favour their peculiar follies."

Thus imagination had passed through three phases.

specific senses. "Properly and literally the percipient is said to *draw his perception from the object*, which is therefore in the genitive."—GREEK GRAMMAR, 451—*Genitive of Ablation*.

In the older psychology, it was the faculty representative of the "sensible ideas" which are presented by the objects of the senses. In later philosophical usage, it was the repository of images conveyed by the lively channel of sight. And then it was pretty generally used as an expression of grave banter.

We have already seen that Hobbes had begun to discriminate fancy from imagination. If even his fine prose has been unable to throw a charm over this dull disquisition, let us obtain pardon by turning to a passage of somewhat earlier date in Ben Jonson's "Vision of Delight: "

"Break, Phant'sy, from thy cave of cloud,  
And spread thy purple wings ;  
Now, all thy figures are allow'd,  
And various shapes of things ;  
Create of airy forms a stream ;  
It must have blood, and nought of phlegm ;  
And though it be a waking dream,  
Yet let it like an odour rise  
To all the senses here,  
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,  
Or music in their ear."

When Phant'sy, unable to resist this exquisite strain, breaks forth from her cloud, and speaks, the poet manifestly attributes to her the capricious, the incongruous, the gay colours and sweet flowers, rather than the awful beauty and sublimity of nature.

"If a dream should come in now to make you afeard,  
With a windmill on his head, and bells at his beard—  
The haunches of a churn, with the feet of a pot,  
And the tail of a Kentish man to it : why not ?

Why, this, you will say, was phantastical, now,  
 As the Cock and the Bull, the Whale and the Cow.  
 But, vanish ! away !—I have change to present you ;  
 And such, as I hope, will more truly content you.  
 Behold the gold-haired form descending here,  
 That keeps the gate of heaven and turns the year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The gaudy peacock boasts not, in his train,  
 So many lights and shadows, nor the rain,—  
 Resolving Iris \* \* behold !  
 How the blue bindweed doth itself infold  
 With honey-suckle ; and both these entwine  
 Themselves with bryony and jessamine.”

On the whole, then, imagination and fancy led a vagabond, precarious, and fluctuating existence in language. Sometimes they were used indiscriminately. Sometimes imagination was banished into the realms of Queen Quintessence of Entelecheia, while fancy was made the Gloriana of the poetic fairy-land from which she was driven. Very often imagination was hypos-tatized into the airy, feminine element of the human mind, and was pitched by grave philosophers at pleasant essayists, or by matter-of-fact persons at people whom they did not quite understand. The distinction, as drawn in this lecture, is due to Wordsworth.

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#### NOTE II.

WE have much reason to thank those great writers who have won for English blank verse its position in our literature. Well said Waller, and almost prophetically,

in his day, "Rhyme continues still, and will do so, till some excellent spirit arise that has leisure enough and resolution to break the chain, and free us from the troublesome bondage of rhyming. But this is a thought for times at some distance." With all his wonderful mastery of the rhymed heroic, with all the music of his triplets, and all the majesty of his Alexandrines, even Dryden paid homage in theory to blank verse :

"Barbarous nations, and more barbarous times,  
Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes —  
But Italy . . . .  
With pauses, cadence, and well-wedded words,  
And all the graces a good ear affords,  
Made rhyme an art, and Dante's polish'd page  
Restor'd a silver, not a golden age.  
Then Petrarch follow'd, and in him we see,  
What rhyme improved in all its height can be,  
At best a pleasing sound and fair barbarity ! "

On the construction of blank verse (with all deference to one of the finest critics and poets of the day), Mr. Arnold has a theory against which I must appeal. "Milton's muse," he says, "has the true oratorical flow of ancient tragedy, produced mainly, I think, by his making it, as the Greeks made it, the rule, not the exception, to put the pause at the end of the line, not in the middle. Shakespeare has some noble passages, particularly in his "Richard the Third," constructed with this, the true oratorical rhythm; indeed, that wonderful poet, who has so much besides rhetoric, is also the greatest poetical rhetorician since Euripides. Still it is to the Elizabethan poets that we owe the bad

habit, in dramatic poetry, of perpetually dividing the line in the middle. The constant occurrence of such lines produces, not a sense of variety, but a sense of perpetual interruption."

Let it be considered, whether blank verse, where the meaning terminates and the emphasis falls upon the last syllable through a long series of lines, does not leave the impression of a sort of break-down in the rhymes, a marred and tuneless attempt at measure, like Quasimodo's in the "Hunchback." To obviate this, the poet should from time to time lift us lightly over the fence of the last syllable, and put us on into the next line. It is this which discriminates the blank verse of its greatest masters—Milton, Shakespeare, Cowper, and Wordsworth—from that of all others. Between the two managements of the measure there is a difference analogous to that between a straight French canal and a stream meandering in many circlets of silver. Shakespeare, especially in his most elevated passages, has a beautiful way of carrying on the thought from line to line, so that not only does each line satisfy the exactions of the ear, but we have a number of intervolved rings of harmony. Each joint of the passage, when it is cut, quivers with melody. The alliteration is carried on from one line to the next, and wonderfully assists the effect. For instance—

"Ariadne *passioning*  
For Thesea's *perjury*."



"The moon like to a silver *bow*,  
New bent in Heaven."

If we suppose the "Tempest" to represent the culmination of Shakespeare's style and versification, we shall expect to find this characteristic in its more elevated passages. And we do find it; for example—

"Many a *time*  
The harmony of their *tongues* hath into *bondage*  
Brought my *too* diligent ears."

I might cite a multitude of passages. I need only indicate Ariel's threat in the Third Act :

"You fools ! I and my *fellows*  
Are ministers of *fate* : the elements  
Of which your swords are *temper'd* may as well  
Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at-stabs  
Kill the *still-closing* waters, as *diminish*  
One *dowle* that's in my plume."

"*Thee*, of thy son, Alonzo,  
*They* have bereft, and do *pronounce* by me,  
Lingering *perdition*."

Contrast with this the versification of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," throughout, and the effect of such lines in Milton, as

"Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since,  
Of fairy damsel met in forest wide,  
By Knight of Logres or of Lyonesse,  
Arthur, or Pelleas, or Pellenore."

Had the genius of the French language admitted of a measure analogous to our blank verse, I believe that such a poem as "La Légende des Siècles" would have gained infinitely in naturalness and general effect.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD'S POETRY.

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**T**HOUGH Mr. Matthew Arnold\* may still be called almost a young man, my first acquaintance with his poetry is nearly a quarter of a century old. Some of us must have been present at an Oxford Commemoration in that sweet city, as Mr. Matthew Arnold himself has expressed it—

That sweet city with her dreaming spires,  
Which needs not June for beauty's heightening.

The recitation of the University Prize Compositions is one of the special attractions of that great gathering. At the Commemoration of 1843, the rostrum on the English side, which had been graced on previous occasions by such men as Dean Milman, Heber, the late Earl of Carlisle, and Mr. Ruskin, was filled by a

\* I am happy to have the opportunity of referring to two essays upon Mr. Arnold's Poetry, by the late Mr. William Caldwell Roscoe, in the second of two volumes of Poems and Essays, edited, with an exquisitely touching memoir, by Mr. R. H. Hutton.

scholar of Balliol, Matthew Arnold, son of Dr. Arnold, Head Master of Rugby School. Report spoke highly of the performance, an English poem on the subject of one whose memory was then hateful in Oxford—"Nous avons changées tout cela"—Oliver Cromwell. As far as the recitation was concerned, the company was doomed to disappointment. Upon these festal occasions the young men in the galleries of the Sheldonian Theatre amuse themselves with applauding and hissing the objects of their favour or dislike. High above every sound are usually salvos of cheers for the ladies. These cheers were drowned by an explosion of wrath against an unpopular proctor, so savage, and so obstinate, that the proceedings of the day were summarily closed by the retreat of the Vice-Chancellor. The Newdigate Prize Poem was, however, printed. You will allow me to quote its opening lines, which are now, I think, a literary curiosity. They will no doubt remind some of us of one of Wordsworth's noblest sonnets on the two voices of the mountain and of the sea. But they form a singular contrast to the Oxford Prize Poems of the time, which were almost invariably either Heber and water, or Pope and water, beginning with a sunset, or an invocation and ending, *de rigueur*, with the Millennium and the conversion of the Jews.

High fate is theirs, ye sleepless waves, whose ear  
Learns Freedom's lesson from your voice of fear,  
Whose spell-bound sense, since childhood's hour, hath known

Familiar meanings in your mystic tone,  
Sounds of deep import, voices that beguile  
Age of its tears, and childhood of its smile.  
High fate is theirs, who, where the silent sky  
Stoops to the soaring mountains, live and die ;  
Who scale the cloud-capp'd height, or sink to rest  
On the deep stillness of its sheltering breast.  
Around whose feet the exulting waves have sung,  
The eternal hills their giant shadows flung.  
No wonders nursed thy childhood ! not for thee  
Did the waves chant their song of liberty.  
Thine was no mountain home, where Freedom's form  
Abides, enthroned amidst the mist and storm,  
Or whispers to the listening winds that swell  
With solemn cadence round her citadel.  
These had no charm for thee—that cold calm eye  
Lit with no rapture as the storm passed by,  
To mark with shiver'd crest the reeling wave,  
Hide his torn head beneath his sunless cave,  
Or hear mid circling crags the impatient cry  
Of the pent winds that scream in agony.

Since 1843, Mr. Arnold has become Professor of Poetry at Oxford. As one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools he has been led to write a volume upon education in France. He has also produced certain trenchant papers which do not exactly flatter Anglo-Saxon vanity, a volume of Essays in Criticism, and four volumes of poetry, with which we are at present concerned.\* Even in England, Mr. Arnold's poetry, with the exception of "The Forsaken Merman," and the prayer entitled "Desire," cannot be said to have

\* May I be allowed to express a hope that some of the pieces in the first volume published by Mr. Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems," and which he has withdrawn from subsequent editions, may find a place in a future revision of his poems ?

gained extensive popularity. Here in Dublin, where we are so much stronger in science than in literature, it is little known. But it seems to stand, in a remarkable way, the mutations of popular taste, rather gaining than losing as time goes on. Its admirers, while they avoid an invidious and damaging comparison with Mr. Tennyson—whose works cover so much a broader canvas, and speak so much more powerfully to the heart, and even to the intellect upon some sides,—yet whisper among the initiated that in Arnold's exquisite sense of form, in the artistic finish of his verse, in the instruments by which he produces his effects, and in the incisive directness of his style, they find something which they miss in the filtered style and occasionally tortuous conceits of the Poet-laureate. For my part, I decline any such comparison. I shall simply endeavour, this afternoon, to bring before you the necessary data for a just estimate of Mr. Arnold's poetry.

The first and great test by which every poet must, in the end, stand or fall, is his power of producing an effect, and leaving a definite impression. The effect must be a permanent one, addressed to permanent principles of human nature. The effect produced by Childe Harold was unlimited at the time. It will be long read for its descriptions; but, taken as a whole, it was addressed to an ephemeral sentiment, and will not rank among the eternal monuments which are carved out in stone that can never crumble. A poem is not to be judged by isolated ornaments, by details

however beautiful, but by the bearing of those details upon the whole effect. In this respect poetry is analogous to oratory. The greatest orators are those of whom it is nearly impossible to give specimens. Their genius is a soul which dwells in no particular part, but pervades and vivifies the whole mass. Thus, Lord Brougham has observed that it is almost as hopeless to give the effects of any oration of Demosthenes by splendid passages, as to produce an adequate idea of the boundless elasticity, the matchless symmetry, the ethereal attitude of the whole Belvidere Apollo by the production of a finger or of an ear.

An eloquent French critic has lately complained of the radical defects of contemporaneous poetry in France.\* Their poets, he tells us, are full of a weak inoffensive egotism. Their poems are reveries, and produce upon us an effect like that of a person who insists upon telling us a dream in a drawing-room. They are pervaded by an affectation of melancholy. Description is the one thing accurately and beautifully done, and it occupies an inordinate space. The rhymes are not fitted to the verses: the verses seem to be written for the sake of the rich and luxuriant ingenuity of the rhymes. Perhaps, in much of our own poetry, we may trace two at least of these characteristics.

First, the want of a definite aim. Turgid and unnatural language is necessarily adopted to cover over poverty of subject. Of the speaker, of the poet,

\* M. Martha.

how often do his admirers exclaim, with upturned eyes, what a style, what expressiveness! The dear man can say whatever he pleases. Very likely; but then the dear man has nothing to say. To write even plausible prose, a man must have something to say; to write verse appears in the estimation of many to involve no necessity of the kind. The composer rhymes, as Cimon whistled, for want of thought. The recurrent chink of sounds suggests to him heterogeneous ideas which do not naturally rise from his subject,—

Rhymes the rudder are of verses,  
With which, like ships, they steer their courses.

This rudder of rhyme steers the writer on through a dim sea of sounding nonsense. He seems to set out from no place, and to go nowhere in particular. He aims at nothing, and he hits it.

A still more general characteristic of much of our poetry is want of judgment, want of subordination of parts to the whole, and of details to the general effect. In speaking of landscape gardening, Lord Chatham finely said that it required the prophetic eye of taste. He means, of course, the faculty of calling up the scene as it will be under the modifications produced by certain changes, of divining the effect produced by the removal of a tree in one place, and the addition of a tree in another, and of passing judgment upon it as a whole. With this prophetic eye of taste the poet should be able to survey his work, and divine the

symmetrical relation of its parts. Of our modern poetry there is no more admirable feature than its description of nature and of scenery. It has been shown by Humboldt, in some of the finest pages of his *Cosmos*, that our modern feelings of reverence, half rapturous, half melancholy, for nature, may be first detected in the writings of the Christian Fathers. I believe that it would be no difficult task to trace it to a yet more sacred origin, in those words which our common Christendom will never let die. But the fact is certain. Cæsar crosses the Alps; the eternal snow and the mountain glory are unnoticed and unfelt: he whiles away the tedium of the journey by composing a treatise upon grammatical analogy. I say thus much to prove that I am not insensible to the charms of natural description, to Byron's Lake Lemán, or to Tennyson's island in *Enoch Arden*. But this beautiful adjunct of poetry has usurped a place among us which does not belong to it. Every art has a limit imposed upon it by the materials to which it is restricted. Marble cannot represent the living flexibility of a tree, much less the infinite variety of green in the forest. The musician oversteps the boundary of good sense when he would represent a colour, or a scent. The poet mistakes his art when he vainly attempts to rival the painter by coloured words. He can only introduce in painful succession the objects which the painter can project simultaneously before the spectator. It has been shown by Burke that there are combinations of



words which no painter can rival. Suggestiveness, concentration—these are the proofs of a great poet's hand; these are the characteristics of description which painting cannot rival. Keats—

Where the dead leaf fell there did it lie;

Tennyson—

Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves,

are specimens of this. How many of our poets will sacrifice a thought to a prettiness about the moonlight, or smother it up in a basket of rose-leaves. Mr. Kingsley lately referred to the number and excellence of our poetesses. He seemed to think that the only office left to literary husbands was the amiable task of becoming reviewers of their ladies' poems. How far the characteristics to which I have referred are feminine, I shall not attempt to decide.

Indeed, our critical principles seem to be vitiated. When we read a volume of poems, we exclaim, How exquisite! because the eye falls upon a pretty description of a garden or of a river. There is a picture by an admired painter of the day in a private collection. Its subject is Alfred the Great before a Battle. The king is in his tent; some signs of warfare are in the distance, but the whole foreground of the picture is filled up with hawthorn. Such exquisite minuteness of observation, such accurate delicacy of colouring, such flakes of rosy white that seem to be

scented, cannot elsewhere be found. Yet, taken as a whole, the picture has one fault—it is all hawthorn, and no Alfred. Of many poems of the day, written with feeling and talent, the verdict of posterity will be expressed by the French proverb—"The sauce is worth more than the fish." The descriptions are but blossoms, after all. The poem, like the tree, will ultimately be valued by the solidity of its trunk.

Mr. Arnold has expressed more strongly than any living writer his conviction that poetic art has its rules; that it is not a chronic anarchy, broken only by the intermittent dictatorships of transcendent genius. He is, therefore, the last man who will complain of being judged by his own theory. A preacher, indeed, does not always like to be referred to his own sermon; I suppose that it is sometimes awkward for a Parliamentary orator to be contradicted by some pungent sentence from one of his own political works.

Keen are his pangs, but keener far to feel  
He nursed the pinion that impell'd the steel.

I must honestly say that in point of structure and definite aim, Mr. Arnold's poems—except, perhaps, "Balder Dead" and "Sohrab and Rustum"—seem to have fallen far short of his own standard. In "Tristram and Iseult" the package is loosely tied; the framework is weak and vacillating; the third part drags on like a disconnected story. "Merope" is constructed with great skill up to a certain point; but when Merope, about to slay the sleeping Æpytus, dis-

covers that he is her son, shrieking lets the axe drop, and falls insensible, the tide of interest ebbs. We pass on with some degree of weariness, as if to a second story. Mr. Arnold's critics have not without reason said that "Merope" is a melo-drama, not a tragedy.

In subordination as well as finish of details, Mr. Arnold possesses an exquisite tact, which can only be surpassed by the great classical writers. It is a principle of poetic art that everything should in some sense serve for ornament, yet that everything introduced merely for ornament is an error. Beautifully ornamented as is "Sohrab and Rustum," it is questionable whether one detached ornament, pinned on for its own sake, and impeding the general effect, can be detected in it. For instance:—

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,  
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,  
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,  
And follow'd her to find her where she fell,  
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off descries  
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short, uneasy sweeps  
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams  
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she  
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more  
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;  
Never the black and dripping precipice  
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:—  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,  
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood

Over his dying son, and knew him not.  
     And he saw that youth  
 Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
 Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,  
 Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe  
 Of an unskilful gardener has been cut;  
 Mowing the garden grass that's near its bed,  
 And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,  
 On the mown, dying grass:—so Sohrab lay,  
 Lovely in death, upon the common sand.

Those who know the poem will have felt that these exquisite passages are not mere purple rags. They bring out more clearly the central aim and interest of the poem—Rustum's unconsciousness that Sohrab is his son.

Of Mr. Arnold's self-restraint in details I may cite what seems to me a remarkable instance. No faculty has been more abused by many eminent modern poets than that of flower-painting. Every one, indeed, must admire those tender touches with which Virgil—in this respect, too, the first of moderns—has described some flowers in his *Georgics*. No one ever found that picture in *Cenone* misplaced:—

From the violets her foot  
 Shone rosy white.

No one ever wished one colour away from the rich lines in which Milton brings *Paradise* before us, or one flower less in *Perdita's* garland:—

    Daffodils,  
 That come before the swallows dare, and take  
 The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
 Or Cytherea's breath—pale primroses,  
 Bold oxlips.

But really the horticultural and garden-plot school of poetry has passed the bounds of toleration. Our poets not only show us the anemone trembling like a bridal veil, and the wild rose on its spray shaking to the music of the waterfall; they tumble them in upon us in buckets-full, until we grow angry with the gentle things, and wish to fling them out of the window. The Flower-Garden in Maude has always been a trial to me. I cannot away with the pimpernel. Mr. Arnold is pre-eminently the poet of English flowers. The names which bring before us the finest scents and most subtle colours of our woods and meadows come to him at his will. For instance:—

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,  
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,  
 Before the roses and the longest day—  
 When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,  
 With blossoms, red and white, of fallen May,  
 And chestnut-flowers are strewn—  
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,  
 From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,  
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:  
*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?  
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,  
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,  
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,  
 Sweetwilliam, with its homely cottage-smell,  
 And stocks in fragrant blow;

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,  
And open, jessamine-muffled lattices,  
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,  
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is gone!  
What matters it? next year he will return,  
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,  
With whitening hedges and uncrumpling fern,  
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,  
And scent of hay new-mown.  
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;  
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,  
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—  
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,  
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour  
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!  
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?  
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,  
I know the Fyfield tree,  
I know what white, what purple fritillaries  
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,  
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields;  
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—  
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,  
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossomed trees,  
Where thick the cowslips grew, and, far descried,  
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,  
Hath since our day put by  
The coronals of that forgotten time;  
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,  
And only in the hidden brookside gleam  
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who, by the boatman's door,  
Above the locks, above the boating throng,  
Unmoor'd our skiff, when, through the Wytham flats,  
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,

And darting swallows, and light water-gnats,  
We track'd the shy Thames shore?  
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell  
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,  
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?  
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well.\*

It is a singular instance of Mr. Arnold's restraint that he has never given undue predominance to a poetry of flowers.

A second test by which a poet may fairly be judged is his style. Here, again, Mr. Arnold himself makes us exacting. In pages of excellent prose, where he cuts out his thought as if in marble, with a strong, haughty, careless grace, he has let us know what he thinks of our earliest writers generally. For our prose, Addison's Attic elegance often gilds moral common-places. Jeremy Taylor is a kind of provincial Bossuet. Burke is Asiatic. Jeffrey is superficial, and Macaulay a rhetorician. Mr. Mill is logical and serried, but he knows nothing of the grand style. Our poets do not fare much better at his hands: except the very greatest, they are haunted by an incurable defect of style.

I could wish that Mr. Arnold would devote himself to a special criticism upon Dryden, a subject which Scott and Macaulay have not exhausted. Wanting in tenderness, in natural description, in suggestiveness, in the higher imagination, he is the orator among

\* "Thyrsis. By Matthew Arnold." Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1866.

our poets.\* He is haunted by no unwearied pursuit of unattainable excellence; yet, at an age when the fire of genius has generally died out, his grandest thought rises before his soul, and shapes itself out in one of the first of English lyrical productions.† The finer features of external nature and of the human heart elude his coarse but powerful grasp. His birds are always painted; his summer always fries; his disappointed lovers invariably howl. Perspiration is with him the inseparable adjunct of sunlight and of passion. Yet reason never spoke in language which is clearer, more masculine, or more sonorous, and wit never flashed off more cutting antitheses. Compare his best passages with those of Pope; trace the development of an idea in their hands. Pope's music is more accurate, but it is thinner. In Pope the intellectual process is addition; in Dryden, evolution. Pope strings beads; Dryden fuses metal.

From this estimate of English style has arisen Mr. Arnold's craving for something among ourselves analogous to the French Academy. He could sympathise with the enthusiast who proposed that each of his

\* "With the simple and elemental passions, *as they spring separate* in the mind, he seems not much acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the relations of society, and confused in the agitations of life." This criticism of Dr. Johnson seems to me one of the subtlest and truest that ever was written.

† It is singular that Dryden's great ode should have been a piece of task-work. "I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast;"—he says, peevishly, to his sons—"this is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast."



academic brethren should be bound by an oath never to use words which were not to be found in the Dictionary of the Academy. Certainly, in our English freedom from literary authority and tradition, our style has become *specky*. There is no form of verbal heresy which does not lurk in the highest quarters among a people with so much laxity of literary conscience. Take some of the vilest of words: "endorse," "reliable," even "talented," after Coleridge's exposure, are still to be heard from the lips of orators, or seen in the pages of elegant essayists. "Allude to," when a name or point has just been distinctly mentioned; I find it in a letter recently written by the most eloquent of living Englishmen. "Celebrity," in the sense of celebrated person; I myself heard it fall from a literary man of the highest eminence, in a lecture read before the most select audience which England can produce. No shudder ran through the assemblage; I am alive to tell the tale.

Swift, with his inimitable style—able to carve out a tumour in alabaster, and enshrine putrescence under a crystal case—proposed to Harley the institution of an academy. The project came to nothing, as the ministry would not give it money. I am not exactly sure whether a scheme for absolutely disabling words from becoming the vehicle of the concealment of thought, for giving to language its ultimate precision and fixity, will find a prominent place in the budget of any Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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This laxity and inelegance in the use of language has largely infected our poetry. As of the lower age of Latin literature, so of ours, it may be said, "People only look for that which glares—style is no longer the simple vestment of thought, deriving all its elegance from its perfect proportion with the idea to be expressed."

There is a chapter in Aristotle's Rhetoric on Frigidity of Diction which deserves to be studied by young poets as well as young orators. Of this frigidity in prose there are four characteristics: compound words; out-of-the-way words; epithets too thickly laid on, and taking the place of thoughts, like the seasoning turned into the food;\* excessive metaphor. Just as epithets, or brief touches, used by a real orator will be found to be compressed arguments, so those used by a real poet will be found to be compressed descriptions, or situations illuminated by that superior light which genius only can throw around them, and which all the rush-lights of declamation can never give. When Homer compares the eloquence of Nestor with that of Ulysses; when Plutarch tells us that Cato saw that it was time to die, "because the birds began to sing;" when Goethe represents one about to commit suicide as looking up "to the starry and eternal heavens;" when Virgil shows us the bees led forth *vere suo*, or Orpheus loses Eurydice *jam luce sub ipsâ*; we feel

\* Τὰ Ἀλκιδάμαντος ψυχρὰ φαίνεται· οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἡδύσματι χρήται ἄλλ' ὡς ἐδέσματι, τοῖς ἐπιθέτοις οὕτω πυκνοῖς. κ. τ. λ.

the difference between declamation and a really great style.\*

In this respect Mr. Arnold holds a very high place among living writers. He despises neither antithesis nor metaphor : but he is without the straining after perpetual metaphor which is the feminine affectation of beauty, and the play of perpetual antithesis which is the masculine affectation of thought. His use of epithets has all the proprieties of which I have spoken. For instance :—

Vain is the effort to forget,  
Some day I shall be cold, I know,  
As is the *eternal moon-lit snow*  
Of the high Alps to which I go :  
But ah, not yet ! not yet !

Awhile let me with thought have done ;  
And as this *brimm'd uncrinkled Ithine*,  
And that *far purple mountain line*,  
Lie *sweetly in the look divine*  
Of the slow-sinking sun.

Again, what *curiosa felicitas* in these epithets of the sea, in the well-known lines to “ Marguerite : ”—

And bade betwixt their shores to be  
The *unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea*.

Once more :—

On winter evenings, when the roar  
Of the near waves came, *sadly grand*,  
*Through the dark, up the drowned sand*.

\* I must here acknowledge my obligations to M. Martha's article upon Contemporary Poetry in the “ *Revue des Deux Mondes*,”

This perfection of style is a higher merit than is commonly acknowledged. No man can write very well and think very ill. A really good style is like the ocean water, which is blue upon the surface in proportion to the intensity of the saltiness in its depths.

A third point to be examined in any poet, and without which no satisfactory estimate of his merits can be formed, is his versification.

Two different strains of versification are to be found in all our considerable poets, the classical and the romantic. The classical is represented by our heroic blank verse; by heroic rhyming couplets; by what may be called the heroic lyrical music of Collins, Gray, Dryden, and Wordsworth; and by the quatrain employed by Tennyson in the *Dream of Fair Women*. The Spenserian stanza stands between the two schools, while the romantic has for its rhythmical expression all the richly-coloured and undulating measures which respond fitly to the varied moods of our modern life. Our heroic blank verse is the most difficult measure in the language. In ordinary hands it is but mangled prose, verse by right of the eye not of the ear, cheating expectation of the pleasure of a rhyme. Eminent poets have utterly failed to produce it. Thomson's merits are not those of versification; he runs us over ruts, and is always bringing us up with a jerk. Byron's blank verse is tuneless, disfigured by weak endings, and a constant scramble of final dissyllables. Shakespeare's blank verse, with its wavelike music, and its alliterations

running on from clause to clause, in its more elevated passages—especially in the *Tempest*—appears to represent the utmost beauty which this measure can attain. Milton, and after him, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, stand in the next degree. Mr. Arnold may fairly claim his place with these, though his classical horror of dividing the line in the middle sometimes deprives him of variety of cadence. I would refer for proof to “*Sohrab and Rustum*,” especially its closing lines; and to “*Balder Dead*,” especially that matchless description of the burning of Balder’s ship in the funeral.

Mr. Arnold’s romantic measures are not less exquisitely tuneful. No poet has ever rhymed more carefully than Tennyson. I believe that in all his works but three false or broken rhymes can be found, three identical endings.\* Mr. Arnold’s versification is hardly less careful, and sometimes marvellously

\* No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought, to lift the hidden ore,  
That glimpses, rising up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o’er  
Each little sound and sight.

In a clear-wall’d city on the sea  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily,  
An angel look’d at her.

Evermore

Most weary seem’d the sea, weary the oar.  
Then some one said, “We will return no more.”

Though I remember Dryden’s saying about “the small wits, who love to track great wits in the snow of other men’s thoughts,” I will

felicitous. I must except his Sonnets, the measure of which he seems to me to have mistaken, and a poem called "Resignation."

It would be unjust to forget one praise which must be assigned to Mr. Arnold, that of having absolutely invented a new measure. The Tennysonian octo-syllabic quatrain, naturalized in English by In Memoriam, is to be found in one of Ben Jonson's most beautiful poems. The lyrical blank verse of Mr. Arnold is absolutely his own. I confess that some of his choral measures affect me like the sound of a stick drawn by a city *gamin* sharply along an area railing. For instance,—this from "Merope: "—

Thou confessest the prize  
In the rushing, thundering, mad,  
Cloud-enveloped, obscure,  
Unapplauded, unsung,  
Race of calamity, mine.

An exquisite specimen may be found in "The Youth of Nature," a poem suggested by Wordsworth's death:—

For oh, is it you, is it you  
Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,

quote one curious unconscious reminiscence in the same great poet:

"Along the bending line of shore,  
*Such hue is thrown, as when the peacock's neck*  
Assumes its proudest tint of amethyst  
Embathed in emerald glory."

SOUTHEY—*Madoc in Wales*.

Compare—

"*Bays, the peacock's neck in hue.*"—TENNYSON.

Our great and most original poet, will be none the poorer for this.

And mountains that fill us with joy,  
 Or the poet who sings you so well ?  
 Is it you, O Beauty, O Grace,  
 O Charm, O Romance, that we feel,  
 Or the voice which reveals what you are ?  
 Are ye, like daylight and sun,  
 Shared and rejoiced in by all ?  
 Or are ye immersed in the mass  
 Of matter, and hard to extract,  
 Or sunk at the core of the world  
 Too deep for the most to discern ?  
 Like stars in the deep of the sky  
 Which arise on the glass of the sage,  
 But are lost when their watcher is gone.

"They are here," I heard

The murmur of Nature reply—

" Loveliness, Magic, and Grace,  
 They are here—they are set in the world.  
 They abide—and the finest of souls  
 Has not been thrill'd by them all,  
 Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.  
 The poet who sings them may die,  
 But they are immortal and live ;  
 For they are the life of the world.  
 Will ye not learn it, and know,  
 When ye mourn that a poet is dead,  
 That the singer was less than his themes,  
 Life, and Emotion, and I ?

" More than the singer are these ;  
 Weak is the tremor of pain,  
 That thrills in his mournfullest chord,  
 To that which once ran through his soul.

Cold the elation of joy,  
 In his gladdest, airiest song,  
 To that which of old in his youth,  
 Fill'd him and made him divine.  
 Hardly his voice at its best  
 Gives us a sense of the awe,  
 The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom,  
 Of the unlit gulf of himself.

One other point remains to be examined. Every modern poet, who has written enough and well enough to live, admits of being philosophically analysed. His general view of existence, his leading ideas, the school of thought to which he belongs, can be definitely ascertained. It is not in studying Wordsworth or Tennyson that we are tempted to forget Aristotle's profound saying, that Poetry is more philosophical than History.

You will understand that I desire to speak with no polemical asperity of a poet to whom, even morally, we owe two acknowledgments. Like every poet worthy of the name, he has bowed to the soft obligation which Dr. Johnson says has been imposed upon all bards since Petrarch. He has found, or invented, a lady, or ladies, to be loved with all the worship of a poet's heart; but of the delicacy and purity of his strains it may be said, in his own language:—

The virgin mountain air  
Fresh through these pages blows;  
And to their leaves the glaciers spare  
The soul of their white snows.

He has also too deep a reverence for faith—at least, as the most beautiful of sentiments—to write intentionally any line that can wound it. Far be it from me, then, to introduce controversial watchwords within the hallowed circle of calm which is wisely drawn around us in this place. But the critic of Wordsworth cannot fail to detect a certain Pantheistic



tinge in some of his writings. He notices it without thinking of calling Wordsworth a Pantheist. If I remark that there is a certain influence of Spinoza's special Pantheism upon Mr. Arnold's productions, you need not draw the inference that I accuse the poet of being a Spinosist.

The writings of Spinoza, studied with a fresh interest in our own days, have produced the most opposite impressions. Fénelon, Leibnitz, the seventeenth century generally, denounced him as an Atheist. Jacobi and others have rather regarded him as a mystic drunk with God, and have hailed him as the holy and calumniated Spinoza. Hegel pronounced that it was necessary for thought to "baptize itself in the sublime ether of the one, universal, impersonal substance of Spinoza." Goëthe tells us in his autobiography what peace of mind and clearness of ideas came over him from reading the works of that remarkable man. After the example of his master, Goëthe,\* Mr. Arnold seems

\* There has lately been an evident wish in Germany to claim Goëthe as a believer in a Personal God and in the Immortality of the Soul. M. Rosenkrantz, in an essay upon the life and writings of the poet, maintains that three different and successive phases may be traced in Goëthe's career: first, Spinosism; second, Kantism; thirdly, an eclecticism, not exactly Christian, but holding all the great dogmas of natural religion. M. Caro, however, proves that such passages as those which may be quoted from Eckerman's Conversations of Goëthe are simple inconsistencies. "Goëthe," he says, "represents the mixed views and confused eclecticism of an age like ours, when men wish to conciliate moral activity, and even the doctrine of progress, with a pantheism which logically destroys it."—See CARO, *La Philosophie de Goëthe*.

to have followed Hegel's advice. Let me briefly point out some traces of a Spinosist colouring in his poetry.

The leading thought of Mr. Arnold's poetry appears to be expressed in the words which he has put into the lips of the doomed Egyptian king :—

Austere powers,  
Not God, but ghosts, in frozen apathy—  
Is it that some Power, too wise, too strong  
Ev'n for yourselves to conquer or beguile,  
Whirls earth, and heaven, and men, and gods along,  
Like the broad rushing of the insurgent Nile?  
And the great powers we serve themselves may be  
Slaves of a tyrannous necessity.

Tyrannous necessity, quiet submission to which becomes the duty of duties, seems to be the pervading thought in these poems.

The same feeling is latent in a very beautifully written poem in Mr. Arnold's earliest volume, which he has withdrawn :—

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

In this lone, open glade I lie,  
Screen'd by dark trees on either hand ;  
And at its head, to stay the eye,  
Those black-tipp'd, red-boled pine-trees stand.  
The clouded sky is still and grey,  
Through silver rifts soft peers the sun ;  
Light the green-foliaged chestnuts play,  
The darker elms stand grave and dun,  
The birds sing sweetly in their trees,  
Across the girdling city's hum ;  
How green under the boughs it is !

How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!  
 Sometimes a child will cross the glade  
 To take his nurse his broken toy;  
 Sometimes a thrush sit overhead,  
 Deep in her unknown day's employ.

\* \* \* \* \*

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,  
 Think sometimes, as I hear them rave,  
 That peace has left the upper world,  
 And now keeps only in the grave.  
 Yet here is peace for ever new,  
 When I who watch them am away,  
 Still all things in this glade go through  
 The changes of their quiet day.  
 Then to their happy rest they pass,  
 The flowers close, the birds are fed;  
 The night comes down upon the grass:  
 The child sleeps warmly in his bed,  
 Calm soul of all things!  
 The will to neither strive nor cry,  
 The power to feel with others give;  
 Calm, calm me more: nor let me die,  
 Since I have but begun to live!

Partly, perhaps, from the example of Wordsworth, one of his poetical masters, yet chiefly from this haunting Spinosist view of a God immanent in nature, we can trace an exaggerated estimate of the moral and spiritual teachings of nature in nearly every page. This feeling assumes at times the passionate intensity of a hymn, and seems to set its words to the music of an organ:—

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you!  
 I come to the wild;  
 Fold closely, O Nature,  
 Thine arms round thy child.

Ah, calm me, restore me,  
And dry up my tears,  
On thy high mountain-platform,  
Where morn first appears.  
Where the white mists for ever  
Are spread and upfurl'd,  
In the stir of the forces  
Whence issued the world.

It is probably this cause more than anything else which has fairly driven Mr. Arnold into the ultra-classical school. The world in which Greek tragedy breathes and has its being, the views of life, and death, and necessity round which it is moulded, meet his instincts and aspirations better than our modern life and the Christian view of it. A Greek tragedy is to him the perfection of poetry. The Hebrews might be Oriental Hurons for all the sympathy which he seems to have with them. The story of Samson he admits to be a noble and dramatic one; but he refers to it chiefly to complain of Milton's infelicity in not having chosen a tragic story of a more perfect kind. He sees a Greek tragedy as an Athenian might have seen it, to whom when the final words were spoken it stood out in broad sunshine—a model of immortal beauty. He supposes that by dint of possessing himself with a Greek subject, and steeping his mind in Attic sunshine, he may reproduce in the nineteenth century, and in the English language, something like Sophocles. If Mr. Arnold finds in himself, as he seems to tell us, a necessity for coming to close quarters with these Greek models, why does he not re-consider the question of translation or

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paraphrase? After Shelley and Mrs. Browning, Prometheus is still open for another attempt. "No man," says Mr. Arnold, "can do his best with a subject which does not penetrate him; no man can be penetrated by a subject which he does not conceive independently." But when we read Dryden's "Flower and Leaf," do we complain that its writer was not penetrated by his subject? Is our pleasure arrested by the thought that Dryden is, after all, only translating Chaucer? When we compare the original and the reproduction, we can trace the peculiarities of each master. Chaucer's strong picturesque touches are marred in the transfer. For instance:—

The leaves were seen  
Some very redde, and some a gladde lighte greene,

are watered into I know not what pale common-place. On the other hand, the old poet's stiff and narrow rhetoric is brightened and made flexible, and the thin metallic tinkling of his lines swells out into a sonorous and majestic music under Dryden's hand. The instance is not exactly apposite; but why should not Mr. Arnold translate Sophocles something as Dryden translated Chaucer, and find time to give us another "Balder" and "Church of Brou"?\*

\* How essentially Mr. Arnold's imagination has become *paganised* is often painfully seen in his language about death and the dead. Thus, in his Monody on Mr. Clough, he says:—

Bear it from thy loved, sweet Arno vale,  
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
*Their morningless and unawakening sleep*  
Under the flowery oleanders pale).

I must notice another trace of Spinosist influence in Mr. Arnold's poetry. I mean his haughty indifference to those distinctions round which poetry twines its finest tendrils. His prose illustrates his verse. We may remember how he brought Mr. Adderley's glorification of the Anglo-Saxon race, and Mr. Roebuck's challenge to history to produce anything like England, face to face with an unhappy infanticide, called Bragg, placed in the lock-up before her trial. Mr. Arnold appears to derive a sublime gratification from the fact that in Ionia and Attica things were different, that on the banks of the Ilissus there was an exemption, not indeed from infanticide, which is a trifle, but from names stamped with such Anglo-Saxon indelicacy as Bragg, Stiggins, and Bugg, names, he adds, with a sigh, appallingly increasing—which is a very serious matter. If in all the world there is nothing like England, the Professor evidently thinks that the world is not much to be pitied. But this sort of indifference makes Mr. Arnold write at an immense disadvantage. The one thing in England which he seems to love is her nature, her lakes and meadows, her woods and flowers, Oxford and Rydal. The musician who despises an instrument will never enrapture us with his performance upon it. The poet who almost despises the language in which he sings will scarcely find its finest tones.


I conclude this lecture by saying, with all sincerity, that I commend to you a poet whose writings have been to myself a real source of pleasure. A hundred

times over, in hours of lassitude and fatigue, I have taken down these volumes, all too slender as they are. The calm pathos of the "Church of Brou;" the sorrowful and wavelike melody of the "Forsaken Mer-man;" the tragic unity of "Sohrab and Rustum;" have never palled upon me. There are pages which seem to bathe one's mind in the cool breath that blows from English meadows, or in the scent that exhales from the pines of Switzerland. Rarely has love found a tenderer interpreter, or separation breathed a sweeter sorrow. I admit, indeed, that the poet's growth has been stunted by his own theory. He knows so much analytically of his art that his creative powers have been prematurely exhausted. He has studied effect so thoroughly that he has, perhaps, become unable to produce it. His intellect is with the ancients, his heart and talent with the moderns. Yet we find in him qualifications, rare at all times, especially rare at present, finish of detail, music of versification, purity of style. Above all, we find a conscientious abstinence from that sensationalism which begins by corrupting the taste, and ends by corrupting the principles of a nation. I must regret, even upon critical, as well as upon other grounds, that we do not trace in the informing spirit of these volumes, a flame which I think might have been grander if it had been kindled at a different altar.

### III.

#### ST. AUGUSTINE AND VIRGIL.

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NE of the best known passages of Christian antiquity is that in which Augustine reproaches himself with the fascination which Virgil had exercised over him in his boyhood. The student of Augustine lights upon much which leads him to conclude that the Christian bishop never emancipated himself from the spell. The chain, of which the first link was set in motion in the school of rhetoric at Thagaste, continued to vibrate to the same touch through all the excitement of controversy and the labours of the episcopate. It may be interesting to consider the sides of Virgil's genius which rendered Augustine susceptible to his influence.

It must be confessed that Virgil's consummate taste and sense of form do not serve to answer our question. These are rarely the characteristics of a provincial society like the Roman-African, never of a civilisation in decline, and of a language in the agonies of dissolution. Bad taste abounds in Augustine's writings, if perpetual antithesis, tortuous conceit, and grotesque disproportion of arrangement, be bad taste. Indeed,



when the Saint exhibits good taste in his compositions, it is a moral quality, a Christian sentiment, not a literary tact. In reviewing a passage of the Confessions, the writer feels that he has been guilty of an extravagant expression. "I felt that my soul and his were one soul in two bodies," he exclaims, in describing his youthful sorrow for a school-fellow and friend. "Therefore," he adds, "I conceived a horror of life, because I was unwilling that I should live on a halved existence. And perhaps I was afraid to die for this reason, lest he whom I loved so tenderly should wholly die."\* In his Retractations, Augustine condemns this hyperbole severely. "However qualified this impertinence may be by the insertion of the word *fortè*, it seems to me a puerile piece of declamatory conceit rather than a grave confession."† The condemnation is one which taste must certainly approve. But it is dictated by a sentiment which is moral, not artistic.

The picturesqueness of Virgil must have had peculiar charms for Augustine. It is a picturesqueness in one important respect different from that of the earlier classical poets. By them Nature is described beautifully indeed, but coldly, with no more tenderness or enthusiasm than a piece of armour. We can understand as we read them how a man like Cæsar could have whiled away the tediousness of a passage across the Alps by writing a treatise upon grammatical analogy. Virgil's subjectivity gives to his descriptions of bees,

\* Confess. iv. 6.

† Retract. ii. 6.

of light and waters, of trees and flowers, a certain modern tone, as of sympathy and fond observation. But this is one important element which Christianity was preparing for modern literature. The tone in which Nature is treated in modern times, though of late years not without Pantheistic intermixture, comes from the dogmas of Christianity. They who believe that Nature is God's creation and witness, that she is fallen and is to be restored, will not fail to survey her lovingly, minutely, and with trembling hope. In one or two passages of the Gospels, in Gregory and Basil among the Christian fathers, we seem to breathe the atmosphere and catch the voice of modern romance and poetry. In spite of the severity with which Augustine handles one florid piece of description in Cyprian, a garland of such passages might be collected from his own writings. His work on Christian Doctrine proves that he knew Aristotle's Rhetoric well. But he found it convenient to forget that chapter so terrible to imaginative writers, on Frigidity of Diction. He did not shrink from the *ἐπιθέτοις πυκνοῖς χρῆσθαι*. He would not have avoided the metaphors of Gorgias or Alcidas.\* He feels the sunshine of the Alps, like Shelley or Wordsworth.† He describes the colouring of the sea, like Ruskin or Byron.‡

\* Rhetoric, iii. 3. It is hard to condemn as too florid, τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν καλὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίου κάτοπτρον.

† See the "De Ordine," and "Contra Academicos," *passim*.

‡ In ipsius quoque maris tam grandi spectaculo, quum sese diversis coloribus induit velut vestibus, et aliquando viride, atque hoc multis

But the true centre of fascination in Virgil for a nature like St. Augustine's must have been his infinite *tenderness*. From the recollection of Terence he recoiled at once with offended pride and wounded delicacy. He had learned to look, almost with indignation and contempt, upon the part of the professional rhetorician which he had so long filled. To be a "word-seller" was a meanness, in an age where there could be no eloquence, because there was no freedom. One of the favourite rhetorical exercises of the time was to give a boy a part of a poem to read off into prose; few exercises could be better calculated to give copiousness of diction and fluency of expression. Now Terence was especially used to afford ground colours for the rhetorical style, which Augustine had learned to despise. More obvious reasons for his hatred of the writings of Terence are, their occasional obscenity, and their connection with a theatre which it was impossible to separate from the taint of Paganism, the voluptuous fascination of the spectacle, and the sanguinary fascination of the circus. It should be remembered that the poetry of Virgil had acquired, wherever Latin was spoken, a popularity which at first sight is surprising. Such exquisite finish, such chased and chiselled lines, are not, one would think, to be appreciated without culture. Yet verses of Virgil are scrawled on the poorest tombs

*modis, aliquando purpureum, aliquando cœruleum est. Quam porro delectabiliter spectatur, etiam quondocunque turbatur?—De Civ. D. xxii. 24.*

among the catacombs, and scribbled upon the walls of Pompeii by the hands of the lowest of the people. Much of this may, doubtless, be due to the good fortune as well as genius of the poet who first shapes the legends of a great people, and under whose subtle touch of healing the broken links of tradition are re-forged. Yet very much must lie in that *subjectivity* with which Virgil has so often been reproached, in that tenderness which, still more than his picturesqueness, makes him "the first of the moderns." \* Of the three elements which critical analysis can detect in the *Æneid*, the Homeric, the national, and the personal, the last was the most fascinating then as now. The voice of exquisite sensibility which falters over the description of a work of art,

"Bis patriæ cecidere manus,"

will always find audience. The people applaud him who makes them laugh; the finer tribute of their love is reserved for him who teaches manhood to weep the delicious tears of which it is not ashamed. It is the want of sensibility which causes Dryden, the greatest rhetorician among our poets, to be so inadequate a translator of Virgil. "I fear," says Johnson, of Dryden, "that he would have given us but a coarse draft of *Eloisa's* passion." He has given us but a coarse draft of the grief of *Orpheus* in the episode which closes the fourth *Georgic*, and of many other passages which

\* M. Villemain.

might be quoted. Augustine, the writer of the tenderest book that the world has ever seen, was a predestined enthusiast for Virgil. No tribute has ever been paid to the poet's genius, comparable to the sweet and burning tears shed by the imaginative boy, and for which the Christian Bishop so bitterly reproaches himself. "Tantillus puer, et tantus peccator."

No human conscience, not even that of a Saint, is perfectly consistent. Had the conscience of St. Augustine been so, he might have reproached himself in reference to Virgil, at later periods of his life. During the months at Cassiciacum, when he was preparing for baptism, Virgil is constantly mentioned in those dialogues which, with all their profound dissimilarity, remind us of Cicero and Plato. Upon the quiet Alpine slopes, in a land of lakes and hills overlooking the plains of Lombardy; in the meadow-lawn during those summer-days, which seem to give lucidity to the intellect as well as to the eye;\* during the soft winter sunshine, in the baths near the villa; the cadence of Virgil's lines, sometimes declaimed by

\* Et fortè dies ita serenus effulsit, ut nulli prorsus rei magis quam serenandis animis nostris congruere videretur . . . paullulum cum rusticis egimus, quod tempus urgebat.—*Contra Acad.* ii. 426.—Disputare cessavere . . . diesque pœnè totus, cum in rebus rusticis ordinandis, tum in recensione primi libri Virgilii peractus fuit.—*Ibid.* i. 418.—Exorto sole clarissimo invitavit cœli nitor, et quantum in illis locis hyeme poterat blanda temperies, in praturn descendere.—*De Ordin. Lib.* ii.—Tertius autem dies matutinas nubes quæ nos coegerant in balneis dissipavit tempusque pomeridianum candidissimum reddidit.—*De Dotâ Vitâ.*—Septem ferè diebus, cum tres tantum Virgilii libros post primum recenseremus.—*Contr. Acad.* ii. 428.

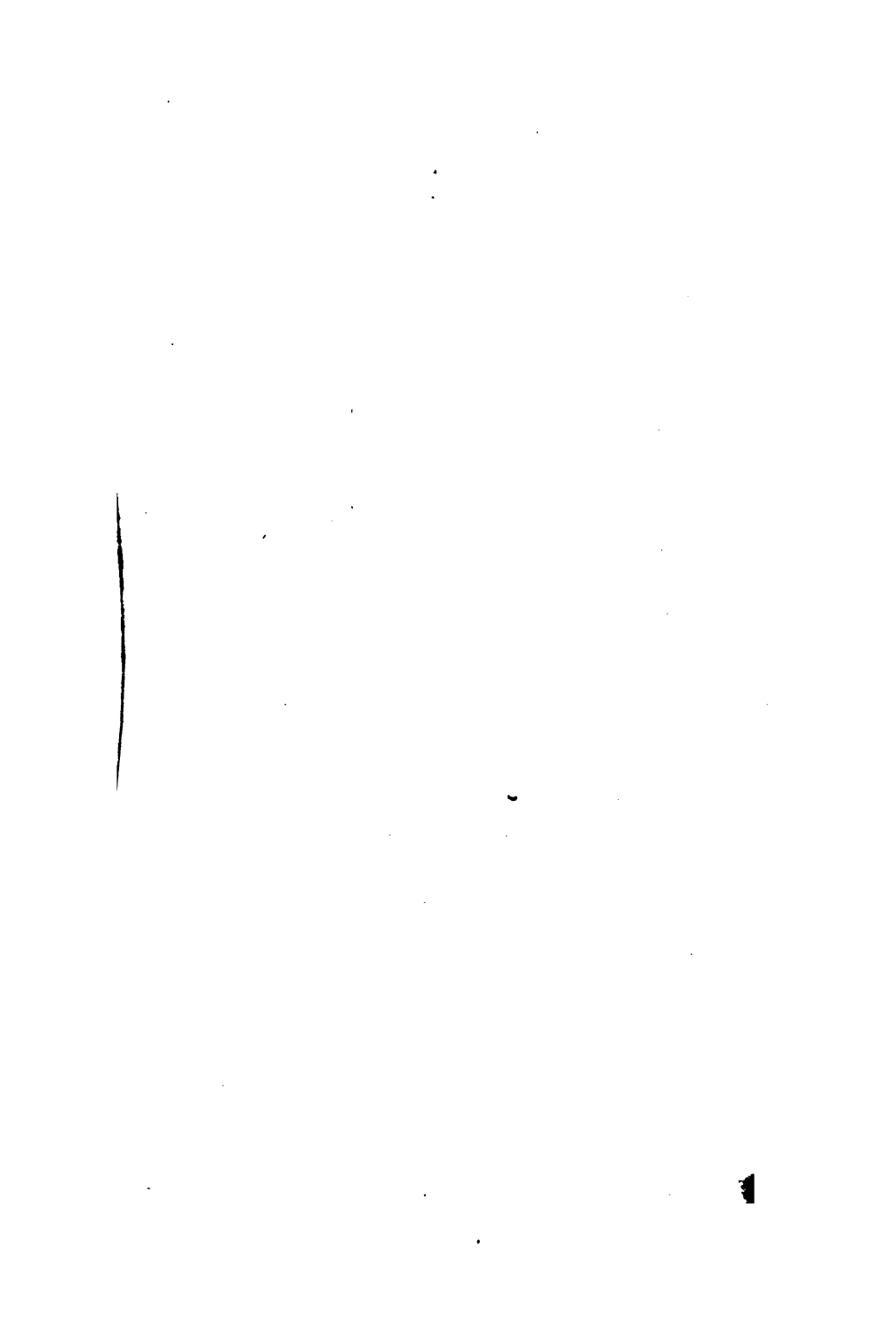
the poet Licentius, sometimes half-playfully repeated by Augustine, still mingles with the household cares of the little company, with Monica's gentle work, the voices of the vine-dressers, and the lowings of the kine. Let us not condemn them. It is but the pleasant morning holiday. Before evening comes they always lift their eyes to those problems which tower before us all, in the nineteenth century as in the fourth, like the eternal hills. The retreat at Cassiciacum will soon be over. From the day of his baptism at Milan, to the day when he lies down to die in the little chamber at Hippo, with his eyes fixed upon the Psalms of David not upon the songs of Virgil, his *Æneid* is closed.

Yet the genius of a great poet asserts its prerogative over us, long after we cease to read him. At times the tenderest and most musical strains which Augustine has ever heard upon earth, mingle unconsciously with his recollections, even when he is listening to catch the strains that come to him from the City of God.\*

\* In the *De Civ. Dei* there is a curious and unconscious Virgilian reminiscence :—"Sine ardoris illecebris et stimulo *infunderetur gremio maritus uxoris*."—xiv. 26.—Cf. "*Conjugis infusus gremio*," *Æn.* viii. 406.

See also his Epistle to Jerome (tom. ii. 69), with its reference to Dares and Entellus.







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